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THE TRIALS OF A STUMP-SPEAKER.

BY

HENRY S. WILCOX

AUTHOR OF FOIBLES OF THE BENCH, FOIBLES OF THE BAR, FOIBLES OF THE JURY, FALLACIES OF THE LAW, A STRANGE FLAW, ETC.

A SERIES OF SKETCHES AND HUMOROUS INCIDENTS THAT HAPPENED DURING THE MANY YEARS' EXPERIENCE OF THE AUTHOR, AND PARTICULARLY DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1888.

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The Trials of a Stump Speaker

CHAPTER I.

CHANGING PARTIES.

BORN of Republican parents and nursed upon Republican milk, swaddled in the New York Tribune, rocked in the cradle to the tune of "John Brown's Body" as a lullaby, there was every prospect that I would be an ossified Republican, relishing every product of the caucus or convention of that party, however unpalatable it might be. But as the time approached when I should become a voter, I listened to the siren song of Peter Cooper, that old patriarch of equal rights, and was jolted by heavy blows from the sledge-hammer of Benjamin F. Butler, the Vulcan of iconoclasts. The result was that when I went to the polls for the first time I cast my vote for the National Greenback Party as proudly as any

signer of the Declaration of Independence affixed his name thereto. From that time until the year 1888, I carried wood and water and did all kinds of chores for the leaders of the Greenback organization, holding myself ready at all times to go anywhere and make a speech or attend a caucus or convention for the upbuilding of the last-named party. Great, indeed, were the sacrifices to which the leaders of the party submitted. Few have ever surpassed them as popular orators and none in the dogged persistency with which they clung to their pet idea. But there is a limit to human endurance, and fondest hopes must sometimes grow weary. If you have long watched over a calf, feeding it the richest milk and most nourishing provender, and you see it does not grow a bit, you will lose interest in the runt. Much worse was the experience of those who toiled for the Greenback Party, for it became smaller each year until finally it even lost its name and a new association called the Union Labor Party was organized out of its fragments. Nine years of toil satisfied me that the third party scheme was a failure. An attempt to grow a tree from an acorn between two monarchs of the forest must ever result in failure. The large trees with their spreading roots will suck up the mois-

ture and nutriment from below, and their interlacing branches shut out the sunlight and air from above, and the little shoot be starved out. Thus when two great parties nearly equally divide between them the voters of the country they will, in their powerful competition for control, gradually disintegrate any sporadic attempt at a new party organization. The boy who climbed the mule's tail met with disaster. He exclaimed through his tears to his doting parent: "Papa, I will never be your pretty boy again." "No," replied his father, "you may never be handsome, but you will know more." My experience with the Greenback Party has made me wiser, and I am confident that no prospect, however alluring, can interest me in another third party project. When the bright star that I followed with such unwavering zeal became too pale to be seen and gradually faded from the horizon, I naturally turned to my first love and announced my purpose of supporting Benjamin Harrison of Indiana, who had been named as candidate for President of the United States against Grover Cleveland, then candidate for re-election. Previous to that time the Republican editors had denounced me as a crank, lunatic and anarchist, until those epithets became a monotonous rub-a-dub-dub. Upon

learning that I would support their ticket, they were as profuse with flattering comments as a circus bill. The Greenback press then suddenly discovered that I had, concealed behind a shining exterior, qualities of perfidy that made Benedict Arnold seem a patriot, and Judas Iscariot a true apostle. Political slander, however, is neither calculated nor intended to deceive. It gives expression to malice, but no one need fear it. It does its object more good than harm. The breath of liars makes political fame. As long as a citizen follows, obsequiously, the lead of his party he is regarded as lumber in the machine, and his identity is lost like a drop of water in the sea; but when he asserts an independent judgment he becomes a rock against which the excited political waves dash furiously, filling the air about him with froth and foam.

When I joined the Republican Party I did not recant or recall any of my utterances, nor was I asked to advocate any new doctrine. I was at once placed at the head of a club, elected a delegate to the State Convention, and by it nominated for Presidential elector. To make room for me, the old pioneers and battle-scarred war-horses were driven away from the trough. For a time I was a great light, about which flitted the insig-

nificant insects that composed the party's rank and file. It was not long, however, before this adulation excited envy. This was evidenced by occasional thrusts from unexpected quarters. When I was entering the State Convention the crowd cheered so loudly and so great a number called for me to speak that the business on hand was suspended until I could be heard from. The chairman was envious, and he said, as he introduced me, "The prodigal has returned. Let us kill the fatted calf." The applause that followed was terrific, but it was as great when I replied, "No, gentlemen, don't kill the calf. Let him continue to live and act as chairman," and I gently waved my hand toward the chair. I told the convention that I regarded my reception as most appropriate; that I needed something to counteract the bad breath that the Greenback and Democratic leaders had been blowing upon me; that from the tone of the Republican press I was led to believe that I had come to fill an aching void; that the Republican Party, like Diogenes of old, had long been searching for an honest man and they had been more successful than the old philosopher, for they had at last found one. Here the chairman asked, "Where is he?" I replied, "Have I been so long among you and yet you

know me not?" "You may be honest," retorted the chairman, "but I see no signs of it." I replied, "Behold it is written a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, but no sign shall be given them." Then some one from the gallery yelled, "You joined the Republican Party to get an office!" "You went to the penitentiary to learn a trade!" I retorted. After the commotion had subsided I said: "The charge that I joined the Republican Party to get an office has been made so frequently that I begin to believe it myself, although I know it is a lie. Still I would like to have it understood that while I am not insensible to the honors that my fellow citizens may thrust upon me without solicitation, I do not propose to kiss any man's wife, his man-servant, his maid-servant, his ox or anything that is his to get into office."

No sooner had the convention adjourned than letters began to come from all parts of the State beseeching me to address the people. One was signed by a dozen prominent men, assuring me that everybody in that vicinity and for twenty miles around could not be content until I addressed them. To this I replied that I would feel greatly flattered by the assurance made if only I could believe it, and in order to ascertain the

facts, I proposed to speak in that locality if one thousand persons would raise two and one-half cents apiece to pay me for my expenses incurred while doing so, or I would speak if a less number would guarantee the entire sum. As I received no reply to this letter I have sometimes doubted the said assurance.

The annoyances I experienced in all other ways did not equal those coming to me from curbstone politicians. Whenever I appeared on the streets, some one would hail me and ask a question about politics and then proceed to give the answer himself in a very offensive manner. A crowd would immediately gather, and before I knew it I would be involved in a joint discussion which I could not abandon without appearing to fly and could not conduct without exhausting my strength so as to unfit me for the discharge of the day's duties in my profession. For several days I began the morning with the resolution that I would refrain from political arguments, but before an hour had elapsed, I found myself neck deep in the boiling broth of a sidewalk discussion, and when night came I had accomplished nothing except furnishing a talking mark for some zealot who had political hydrophobia in its most virulent stage. Finally I concluded that if I must

discuss politics it would be better to abandon everything else and take the stump. There I could air my magnificent views to vast audiences instead of attempting to convert the seventy millions in the nation by arguing with each one separately.

CHAPTER II.

A COLD AUDIENCE.

FEW realize the prodigious labor necessary to conduct a Presidential campaign. The fountain-head of political enthusiasm is the National Committee, having its principal offices in New York, and as subsidiary to it and acting under its supervision are the central committees of the several States. The national organization makes assessments upon the various Republican officeholders and solicits contributions from persons and corporations interested in the result of the election and thus collects the "sinews of war." It engages campaign orators and assigns them to the States and provides for their compensation, expecting the State committees to defray their expenses while speaking in the several States. It compiles and issues a campaign book for the use of stumpers, which contains all the stock arguments that are known to exist in favor of the position of the party and facts showing the fit-

ness of the national candidates. My first task in preparation was to gorge myself with the contents of this book. It was larger than the New Testament, and contained matter as dry and uninteresting as the average insurance policy. Enthusiastic as I was, I could not absorb it. My memory revolted. Even those passages that I had conned until I could repeat them verbatim seemed senseless to me. Whatever ideas were couched in the verbiage, failed to soak in. During the ten days occupied by the State Committee in arranging my appointments, this horrible campaign book was a terror by day and a nightmare at night. I read it through time and again seriatim, then began at the end and read back to the beginning, then jumped into the middle of it and went back and forth and criss-cross. To get some of its turgid contents in my unresponsive mind, I tried the diagram process. I made a skeleton of it, and drawing the ragged outlines before my gaze I tried to cover their ugliness with flesh, hoping thereby to produce something fit for exhibition. But when my time had expired and I was compelled to start for my first appointment I felt greatly distressed for lack of preparation. I knew that I was loaded, that I possessed all the matter necessary to make a

protracted speech, but it was so unassorted and disarranged that the end of my speech was likely to forget the beginning. As the train rapidly sped through the autumn woods I was unconscious of their gorgeous hues. My mind was wandering over the stubble field of this campaign book. Finally, when I approached my destination and heard the sonorous strains of a brass band play "Here the Conquering Hero Comes," I experienced an enlargement of the heart that made me feel that I was cocked and primed for a multitude of Democratic wildcats. I said, "Let me once see the bloodshot glint of a Democratic eye and it will inspire me, at once bring into order all my chaotic knowledge like a magnet arranges iron filings. The white heat of combat will make me glow with fervor until my magnetic presence will charm my vast audience so that I can lead them as easily into the great Republican Party as the good shepherd places his lambs in the fold."

It was 7:40 in the evening when I arrived. I bolted a supper of fried chicken and rushed from the table to the hall. There on a high stage, in a dimly lighted room, with a scattered audience far below me, whose countenances were scarcely visible in the blear light, I began.

What the hall lacked in ventilation it made up in echo. I found that the load of poultry which I carried spavined the wings of my imagination. My weary periods refused to flow freely. I tried to make up for the slowness of my utterances by increasing the volume of the tones. I proceeded in a very loud voice to turn the electric light on the Democratic Party. I canonized the Republican managers as a rosary of saints. My hearers were still unmoved. I then opened an artillery of ridicule. I made the principles of the Democratic Party appear exceedingly lame, halt and decrepit. I cartooned the Democratic leadership. I burlesqued the Democratic position and focused upon its grotesque center the keenest shafts of wit and sarcasm. My audience remained as motionless as tombstones in an evening zephyr.

I then took off my coat, rolled up my sleeves, removed my collar, determined to wake up my audience or perish. I stated the question to be whether God or Satan should reign in America. I plunged at once into the core of this question. I cannonaded the enemies' ranks until I had killed every grasshopper on the field. I perspired profusely. I frothed at the mouth. My voice broke down. I wheezed, drank water and wheezed again. Still my auditors were quiet as mummies

in a sepulcher. I was about to conclude that they were deaf or dead when an event happened that convinced me to the contrary. As I was about to drink a second glass of water one of my audience arose and said, "Mr. Chairman, I object to running a windmill by water."

The applause that followed this objection was terrific. The audience laughed, clapped their hands, spanked their bodies, stamped their feet and shouted. Some bent double and pressed their hands to their shaking sides to keep their ribs in place while they te-he'd to the floor. Some slapped each other, threw their heads backwards, opened their mouths and howled their emotions at the ceiling.

When the noise had subsided I said that no one but a Democrat could run a windmill by whiskey. The retort evoked no enthusiasm. The backbone of my speech had been broken. I gathered up the fag ends and closed in as good order as possible. While leaving the hall the chairman of the meeting informed me that nearly all my audience were Democrats. In this way he accounted for the lack of appreciation shown during the delivery of the speech.

CHAPTER III.

A CADAVER IN OFFICE.

So great was the chagrin experienced at my first meeting that I spent the remainder of the night on a restless pillow, racked and tortured by the recollection of the fizzle my first effort had caused, and my only consolation was the thought that on the morrow I was to speak where my Republican friends greatly exceeded in number the opposition. Great was my surprise when I did not hear a brass band salute the train as it arrived at the station, and there was no one to meet me. I found my way to a hotel, registered, and asked the landlord if arrangements had been made for my speech. He had heard nothing about it. I walked along the principal streets. There was an air of quiet and solemnity painful to me. I saw bills hanging in windows announcing political meetings that had been held the year before, but none relative to my speech. I went to the office of the Republican newspaper and found it in the

possession of a lean, faded girl, who said the editor and foreman had gone to a funeral. She had not heard that I was to speak, and there had been no notice in the last paper. She said the Republican committeeman had also gone to the funeral. I went up the main street and inquired of every one I met, but none had heard I was to speak. It seemed as if the whole party had gone to a funeral. At last I found a man who fished a small bill out of a waste-basket, containing my name. But it did not state when I would speak or what I would speak about. The sight of this bill infuriated me. I clutched it eagerly, crammed it into my pocket and determined to find the committeeman who had thus advertised my meeting, and relieve my pent-up feelings. Late in the afternoon a tall, raw-boned, ungainly, lazy-looking fellow came sauntering down the street and he was pointed out to me as the committeeman. I assailed him at once. "My name is Wilcox. I was sent here to speak to-night. Why haven't you advertised my meeting?" "I have," said he. "Where?" I asked. "In the bottom of a waste-basket or in the mud of a gutter?" "I got out and distributed twenty-five bills," he drawled. I raised my hands in horror and exclaimed: "Twenty-five bills! My God! think of it! And

such bills!" Taking the one out of my pocket I brandished it before him and asked, "Is this insignificant scab one of them? Why, you can scarcely see it with the naked eye. You might have stated what kind of a meeting I was to address and which side of the political fight I would take." "We didn't know," said he. "You have changed your politics so often we didn't know which side of the fence you would be on when you got here." "The condition of the Republican organization in this town ought to be sufficient to make me change if anything would," I retorted. "Have you any suggestions to make relative to my address?" "Nothing in particular," he answered, "except I wish you would avoid saying anything against the Democratic Party. I am running for office and have several Democratic friends who might be offended and vote against me." "What do you mean?" I asked, "by requiring me to make a Republican speech without saying anything against the Democratic Party?" "Why," he said, "a speaker was sent here last year by the State Committee, who abused the Democratic Party, and that speech lost us lots of votes." "Abused the Democratic Party!" I cried, with astonishment. "I did not suppose such a thing could be done;

he must have had a great command of language!" "Well, he hurt their feelings, anyway, and I wish you wouldn't do that," he persisted. I learned this man had larded an arm-chair and roasted his shins in a county office for a quarter of a century until he had become too lazy to comb his hair, and had barely life enough to draw his breath and his salary. He was a fair sample of the deadheads that usually creep into the nerve centers of a political organization after a long period of power. I replied, "I fear I cannot make a Republican speech without saying anything against the Democrats, but I will try." And I did. The meeting was held in a hall so dirty that the rats might well have held their noses when they ran over the floor. The lamp chimneys were shaded with several generations of fly specks. The committeeman was there and a few Republican officeholders who clustered around an old rickety stove like nocturnal bats huddled together. I do not think any Democrats were present, but if they were I did not hurt their feelings. I did not mention the Democratic Party. I focussed my attention on the committeeman. I strove to puncture his rhinoceros hide. I explained to him the simple process of advertising a meeting, and the necessity of procuring a de-

cent hall for such a public address. I described how the Republican Party was crippled by imbecile pap suckers who had gone to sleep in the cogs of the political machine. I claimed that the party in that locality had no use for a political orator, but needed instead a scavenger to clean out and bury the offal and refuse of thirty years. Increasing in fervor as I proceeded, I declared that I had for many years been the carrion clerk in a rendering house where the carcasses of dead hogs were converted into soap grease. That I had become familiar with acres of carrion and the intolerable stench with which it befouls the air, but never before had I beheld such a sloughing aggregation of pus and putridity as had collected in the core of the Republican organization at that point. My effort was useless. The committeeman had fallen asleep. When I ceased, some one wakened him and he came up and shook hands with me, congratulating me on my splendid speech and expressed regret that so few were present to hear it.

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE COUNTY FAIR.

On the following day I was to address a great County Fair on what was known as "Republican Day." County Fairs are a collection of gambling devices and catch-penny concerns, in association with a few agricultural implements, large vegetables and fast horses. Here the raw gosling meanders from one skinning machine to another until his pockets are empty. Here are exhibited the noted freaks in the country, both of nature and of art, horses with fleet limbs, donkeys with big voices, the two-headed woman, the snake-charmer, and last but not least the political orator. Here on the same ground with the "Chester Whites" and the "Poland Chinas," I was placed on exhibition as a sample of the products of Iowa soil. Big pumpkins and big speeches were alike eagerly sought by the management.

I was placed on a platform on the north side of a bass-wood amphitheatre. Immediately in

front of me was a large opening around which blew the south wind against my face. My audience was located on either side of the open space, but so far from me that it would have been impossible for me, thus speaking against the wind, to be heard, even had I possessed a throat of brass inspired with iron lungs. Borne on the southern breeze were the noises of the peanut venders, the gambling fakirs, the side-show orators, the rattle of the merry-go-rounds, the music of the platform dance, the neighing of prize stallions and the braying of remarkable donkeys, all combined and commingled in a great agricultural anthem. I stood in this gale with the sun glaring in my eyes. I sucked wind and belched it forth with all the force of my being, trying by a great and almost superhuman effort to raise my voice above the noise and hub-bub that was all around me. My audience sat in the shade, shelled peanuts, conversed together and seemingly enjoyed themselves just as well as they would have done had I not been speaking. They came and went when they wished to and suffered no special inconvenience on my account. I was regarded as one of the freaks on exhibition. They looked at me as much as they cared to and then went away.

I shouted, I perspired, I sawed the air and I

spouted like a porpoise. "What," I asked, "is the chief glory of this beloved country?"

There came wafted on the air this reply: "Fresh roasted peanuts, double-jointed peanuts, corduroy peanuts! Wipe your eyes and peel their sockets, warm your hands and fill your pockets! Buff-colored peanuts, five cents a glass!"

"Fellow-countrymen," I thundered, "behold the sun-bright record and the achievements of our grand old Republican Party——"

"Go right in now and see the great bald-headed, double-bearded female orang-outang, Urebus Purebus, from Heligoland!" yelled the side-show orator.

"Here the bosom of the true patriot must heave with righteous pride," I continued.

"Here's where you get your ice-cold, rose-colored lemonade, already made, stirred with a spade, wrung from the bosom of a South American lemon, forty degrees below the surface of the earth, by the light of a diamond."

"Standing by the tomb of the martyred Lincoln, what," I asked, "should be the conduct of a patriot?"

"Join hands with your partners and all circle round!" came the answer from the caller at the platform dance.

"Listen to the warning voice from the grave," I continued. Just then the prize donkey lifted up its voice and sang the "ahe-hah-ah-ahi-ha-hahe." My speech was sandwiched with interruptions of the foregoing nature from persons selling home-made pies, taffy, candy, and toy balloons, interlarded with the ringing of dinner-bells, beating of gongs and tooting of tin trumpets. The crowing of gleeful cocks, squealing of hungry pigs, bellowing of uneasy bulls, and numerous barnyard strains joined in the chorus. I competed with this combination for three-quarters of an hour. Some one then announced that in fifteen minutes the great race between "Bare Bones" and "Betsy Shanks" would occur.

"What is your horse race compared with the great Presidential race? I shouted. "The Republican Party has entered a horse with a record and a pedigree as long as the statute of limitations! The Democrats have furnished a critter who has neither ancestry nor posterity! The Republican animal is sound in wind, limb and eyesight; the Democratic beast is blind, wind-broken and spavined! Our horse is trim in build and clean in body and function. The nag of the Democrats is bull-necked, big-bellied, sway-backed, glandered, ring-boned and covered with

excrescences! Which of these do you propose to bet your money on? Which is the most liable to win the race? Why, gentlemen, their weather-beaten combination of skin and bones, weakened by disease and hunger, will be passed on the first quarter-stretch by our beautiful racer as easily as a comet passes the fixed star."

"Say, Cap, cut her short,' said the chairman. "It's time for the races, the horses are ready."

Being thus called down, I desisted from further interference with the pastimes and pleasures of the audience, who were evidently more desirous of witnessing an exhibition of legs than lungs.

CHAPTER V.

THE BLUNDERER.

THE chagrin provoked by the failure of my first meeting had been deepened into disgust and anger by my second, and I was in no mood to endure further persecution. I felt inclined to cancel all my appointments, resign as candidate for Presidential elector and return to my neglected business, but finally determined to try again.

When I arrived at my next appointment I learned that the committeeman was proprietor of a grist mill, a cheese factory, railroad station agent, sexton at the principal church, and landlord at the hotel. He forgot to meet me when the train arrived, and gave the room intended for me to a lightning-rod agent. In publishing the notice of my meeting, he made a mistake in the date. He hired a hall, but failed to observe that it had no stove or heating apparatus. At eight o'clock he escorted me to the place. We found it

brilliantly lighted, filled with empty chairs and cold air. He said he had intended to have the town band play a few tunes, but he had forgotten to make the arrangement; that he had ordered some small bills, but the printer had made a mistake in them and referred to me as a Democratic speaker; that he had arranged for a ladies' choir to be present and sing some stirring campaign songs, but by some inadvertence had told them the meeting was a day later. He said it was a mistake in making an appointment at that place because there were other points in the county which had more need of a speech. He said unfortunately the date had been fixed on the night of a circus and a church festival; and also on the night of his daughter's wedding and he would have to return home soon to attend the nuptial ceremony. I told him I thought a mistake had been made in electing him chairman and another in sending me to speak in his county, and advised him to abandon the meeting. This he would not accede to. I then paced the hall with my hands in my pockets, trying to keep warm while he went out and hired a boy to ring a bell through the streets and yell: "There's goin' to be spe'kin' at the hall to-night!" In the course of time a few weary-looking loafers came strag-

gling in. They buttoned their coats close up around their chins, sat down on the cold chairs and put their hands in their pockets. As soon as the nuptials were over the committeeman returned and called the meeting to order.

In presenting me to the audience he said he had the pleasure of introducing a political giant, whose fame was so great that his name had become a household word in every cottage in the State! and then he had to stop and ask me what my name was.

I then began. The chairman sat down, leaned back against the wall and propped his ponderous feet on the chair rounds. I struck at once for the heart of my subject. I tackled the tariff question, showed how a high tariff raised the wages of labor, and at the same time cheapened the price of its products. The first effect of the tariff, I remarked, was to raise prices, but I said: "Gentlemen, even now things are about to fall." This statement was punctuated by a crash. The chairman's chair suddenly gave way and he tumbled backward on the floor. This filled the frosty atmosphere with merriment. The chairman selected another chair and I continued. My argument now took a pathetic turn. I spoke of the poor Irish peasant who lives on grass. I de-

scribed the famine-stricken multitude who were leaning their gaunt forms over the Atlantic and extending their skeleton hands, begging alms from the world. I bored for water. I spoke of the Irish babies who were so thin that it was necessary to soak them in alum water to get them to hold milk. I described them nursing on shriveled bosoms that were so poor the moonlight shone through them unobstructed. I related these terrible tales with gushing tears, but the audience did not share my pathos. They tittered and chuckled with laughter all the time. I wondered at this until I heard a whine. Then I noticed a large black dog sitting on his hind legs beside me on the stage, loooking mournfully at the audience. Here he had been sitting and whining unnoticed by me during my pathetic Irish appeal. I kicked him from the platform, saying at the same time: "No Democrats allowed to sit on the stage."

When the commotion caused by this incident subsided I resumed my argument. I spoke of the bleak poverty of my parents and the hard fortune that befell me in youth when I drank from frog ponds and grubbed land at five dollars an acre and received compensation in yellow-legged chickens at one dollar apiece. This deeply af-

fected one of my auditors, he arose and interrupted me by proposing that a collection be taken for my benefit. This I declined, explaining that I was now quite prosperous on account of the bounty of Providence and the wise legislation of the Republican Party. I then expatiated on the numerous comforts which Republican legislation had given the country.

When I spoke of the warm houses, my few auditors shivered in the cold. When I spoke of the good clothes, they covered the coffee-sack patches on their knees with their hands.

Before I began my speech I had told the chairman I must leave on the train at 10:15, and asked him to stop me at ten o'clock. This he promised to do. While speaking, I heard an engine whistle. I looked at my watch and found it was already train time. Hoping I might still get the train, I grabbed my coat, hat and valise and started on a run for the depot, but I was too late. I had to remain for the train that was due at three in the morning. In a little while the committeeman reached the depot and explained to me the cause of his failure to stop me at ten o'clock. He said his watch had stopped without his knowledge. He insisted that I go to the hotel and sleep until half-past two in the morning and he would

see that I was called in time for the train. I thanked him for his kindness, but said that I was afraid some unavoidable mistake, inevitable accident, unheard-of misfortune, or never-to-be-expected inadvertency would prevent his waking me in time, and I preferred remaining awake to placing my reliance on this ill-fated committeeman. I became very anxious to leave the scene of constant mistake and misfortune. I dared not doze an instant for fear some dreadful calamity would befall me. I felt in constant danger lest the roof of the depot cave in, a whirlwind pick up the town and scatter it, or an earthquake shake it to pieces and drop the fragments on a lava bed. The train was an hour late, but at last it came and I boarded it and in the gray morning was on the way to my next appointment.

CHAPTER VI.

A GREAT MEETING

WHEN within forty miles of my next appointment I was awakened from my uncomfortable position in the ordinary coach, where I had been trying to get a little sleep, by five gentlemen, who introduced themselves as a committee sent out to meet me and escort me to the city. After each had been properly introduced and a few formal remarks been made, one of them said: "We came specially to urge you not to say anything against prohibition. We have many ardent prohibitionists in our city who will probably vote with us if you do not offend them." "Have no fears for me, gentlemen," I said, "for I have long occupied the crank row in the Prohibition army." "And we," said another, speaking for the three others whom he pointed out, "came as a committee to request you to say nothing in favor of Prohibition, because in our city we have many anti-Prohibitionists whom we expect will vote for us if

not offended." "Don't worry about that," I said, "for while I am, as I previously remarked, a strong Prohibitionist, yet I go to great excess in the matter. I am in favor of prohibiting Prohibition itself." It was now daybreak and in the bleak, frosty autumn morning, worn and exhausted with excitement and loss of sleep, I tried to smile and be merry while this committee proceeded to tell me what I should say in my speech. I was advised to give the Union soldiers great praise, but to avoid saying anything that might offend Copperheads or Confederates, as many of them were now in the Republican Party. In promising pensions to all I must avoid the idea that the expenses of Government would be thereby increased. On the tariff question I was instructed to promise high wages to wage-workers and cheap labor to employers, large prices to manufacturers and low prices to consumers. On the money question I was to show how stopping the coinage of silver had increased the volume of money, and to condemn Grover Cleveland for trying to stop the silver coinage for the purpose of contracting the volume of currency. I was ordered to account for the hard times by over-production and failure of crops, and to prove that the best interests of the Democratic Party re-

quired it to place the Republican Party in power. These were a few of the pieces of advice bestowed upon me so liberally by this committee.

I noticed bills posted on depots as we were whirled by on the train, announcing in glowing colors the great rally to be held that evening. It was after sunrise when we arrived at our destination. As the train approached the station I heard a band playing, and the leading citizens were busily engaged in decorating their places of business with banners and bunting. More than a hundred members of a Republican marching club, dressed with long ulsters and gray plug hats, had come with the band to meet me. It was only two blocks to the hotel where I was to stop, but they had provided an open carriage for me to ride in. After being introduced to the expectant citizens I was deposited in the carriage. The procession, led by the band, then wended its way toward the hotel. Arriving at the hotel, I was advised to take breakfast immediately so that I could prepare for the reception of the school-teachers of the city, who had assembled in the parlors awaiting an opportunity to greet me. Prominent members of the Republican Party went with me to breakfast and kept up a constant stream of questions and advice during the entire

time I was eating. When I had finished I brushed the dust from my wrinkled apparel and proceeded to receive the school-teachers. Headed by the superintendent, a bevy of care-worn young women passed in line before me, extending to me their intellectual palms. Some had dry, bony fingers that crackled and rattled when I seized them; some cold, wet hands that oozed like a sponge in my grasp; some soft, warm, electric palms that made me wish to be a schoolboy again that I might be spanked by them. When I had received these I was informed that the Mayor and his retinue were waiting. As soon as I signified that I would see them, the Mayor entered, followed by the council, police and other city officers. After these came the lawyers, doctors, ministers, merchants and many other branches of business, also members of various lodges. During the entire time the band played in front of the hotel.

I received invitations to go to the courtrooms and sit on the bench with the judges. I was urged to occupy the box in a theater at the matinee. I was cordially invited to many private houses for dinner. Some claimed they were relatives of mine; others that they knew my parents before I was born. I was asked to recommend

others for federal appointments; and some of a more mercenary turn tried to sell me receipts for removing warts and to cure corns.

Among that great crowd that gathered around me were the newspaper reporters. They adjusted their pumps to extract my opinions on the leading questions of the day. I told them that marriage might be a failure, but the Republican party was a grand success; that the frosts of autumn would spare the corn and take the Democratic Party. All this served to keep me talking until night came. I was not allowed one moment's rest. As soon as it was dark the torchlight procession began to form a block away from the hotel, and a vast multitude came out to see it. There were fifteen hundred torches and three brass bands in the procession. At the head of this procession marched the police on foot, then came the carriage drawn by four white horses, in which I rode in company with the county chairman and the candidate for Congress. The line of march was along crowded streets where hundreds of men, women and children clapped their hands, waved their handkerchiefs and shouted as I passed. It was glorious, indeed! At last we reached a high platform in the middle of a public square, from which it was designed that

I should speak. There were acres of people about me. After a selection by the band had been played and the Glee Club had sung a song, the chairman announced that while the crowd was gathering the candidate for Congress would make a few remarks. He was well known as a distressing speaker. His lack of brilliancy was made up in length. He possessed a small, cracked, squeaky voice, but though weak in voice he was strong in gesticulation. He had a coarse, ugly face, yet its absence of beauty was supplied in brass. His ideas were meagre and commonplace, but he had plenty of words. His few remarks continued for two hours and a quarter, during which time the audience gradually dispersed. Frequently during his speech he referred to me as an orator who would follow him with a great speech. Many times he protested that he did not intend to make a speech, but only to occupy a few minutes while the crowd was gathering. After all those who dared to leave had gone home and only the committeemen and a few candidates remained, he introduced me as the young Demosthenes who would plead the Republican cause. I arose and thanked the audience for their kind attention during the long, weary hours they had stood on tired feet with such patience, listen-

ing to the crushing arguments of their candidate, but I insisted that there were laws to prevent cruelty to animals, and I thought the audience under that law was entitled to some protection. Therefore I would not detain them, but hoped at some future time it might be my pleasure to address them. Then the meeting adjourned. I walked back to the hotel with the committeeman. The scene of splendor that accompanied my triumphal ride to the platform had passed away. We went along quietly through the dark streets. Once he broke the silence by expressing a regret that I had been deprived of an opportunity to make my speech. I answered that it was a great pleasure to be used as a billboard to advertise another man. When we reached the hotel there were no delegations waiting to receive me. The chairman asked me to excuse him and went home. I entered the hotel, saw the clerk and asked him for my key. He inquired my name; I told him, received the key and went to my room as unnoticed as any other stranger. The pageant of political splendor had passed, the fox fire had paled, the great man of the morning had become common clay.

CHAPTER VII.

PRINTERS' INK.

NONE of my previous disappointments had caused me so much distress as my last one. It was like jerking me from a warm, perfumed couch into a pool of ice-water. I was now mad, and when I reached my next appointment and no one met me at the train, and I found no arrangements had been made for my entertainment at the hotel, and no bills were posted announcing my speech, I became hot. "Where is the Republican committeeman?" I demanded of the landlord at the hotel.

"He is a lawyer, and his office is over the brick store on the next corner south of here," he answered.

"I want to see him," I said, and started out for that purpose. I found him sitting behind his feet in a filthy office, smoking a cigar, compared with which the odor of a skunk is a delicious perfume.

"My name is Wilcox. Are you the Republican committeeman?" I asked.

"I expect I am," he said.

"Where am I to speak to-night?"

"At the Courthouse."

"What is the matter with the Opera House?"

"It takes money to rent it and we are poor."

"How much?"

"About five dollars."

"Five dollars! I've come one hundred miles to make a speech here to-night and I must have a decent place to speak in. If you can't pay for the Opera House, I can. Come along with me and show me the manager of the house."

He reduced the slack in his legs, hitched up his trousers, and took me to the individual who had control of the Opera House. I said to him, "I came here to speak to-night for the Republican Party. That party has been in continuous power in this State for more than a quarter of a century and in this locality from time immemorial. Its long years of prosperity have made it so poor that it cannot pay for a decent place to speak in. I don't propose to grind my vocal organs to empty benches in a dingy old Courthouse. I want to hire the Opera House. How much is it? I'll pay it."

"Not a cent, Mr. Wilcox," said the manager, bowing politely.

"Thank you. Have it ready for a meeting to-night and I will do the rest," said I. Then turning to the committeeman I said, "Show me a printing office, quick." He complied. I went into the office and said to the man in charge, "Give me a pencil and a sheet of paper." He handed them to me and I wrote as follows:

BEHOLD!!!!

HENRY S. WILCOX, THE GREATEST WIT, ORATOR, NOVELIST, IN THE KNOWN WORLD, WILL POSITIVELY SPEAK IN THE BEHALF OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY AND ANNIHILATE THE OPPOSITION, AT THE OPERA HOUSE TO-NIGHT. LADIES AS WELL AS GENTLEMEN WILL BE PERMITTED TO ENJOY THIS GREAT TREAT.

"Print this on one thousand small hand-bills as soon as possible," I said. "I will return for them in one hour."

Then I told the committeeman he must introduce me to every man, woman and child we

could find on the streets, and in the stores. Reluctantly he complied. When introduced I said, "I am going to speak to-night at the Opera House. If you are a Republican come out and enjoy yourself. If you are a Democrat come and sit in the gale. I will promise that you shall not take cold. Come out and bring with you every man woman and child in your neighborhood. I will do my best to please you." In this way we went from street corner to street corner, and from one business house to another until I had hugged the palms of several hundred people and invited every one to attend my meeting. The hour having expired, we went for the bills. They were printed. I took them, and when I had divided the town into districts I hired a boy for each district to distribute them, charging him to go to every house and read the bill to every one seen on the premises, after which he should give them to each person so that they would be sure to remember to come. After this was under headway I said to the committeeman, "I am tired and sleepy. I have had no rest for a long time. "Can I rely on you to do something?" By this time he had almost come to life. He said, "I will do whatever you wish." "Then," I said, "as soon as it gets dark build a great bonfire in front of the

Opera House. Fire some Roman candles and load and shoot a pair of anvils as fast as you can for half an hour." Relying on his agreement to do this, I returned to the hotel, and when I had eaten a lunch I retired to my room and was soon asleep. About half-past seven the committeeman came to my room and awakened me.

"What's up now?" I inquired.

"I wish you to go down to the Opera House," he said, his eyes beaming like two moons. I looked at my watch and remarked that it was yet not quite eight o'clock. "But the house is packed and the people are getting impatient," he persisted. So I went. We had considerable difficulty to work our way into the hall. The entrance was blocked by a scrambling mob trying to edge themselves in. Our appearance was the sign for a mighty shout. I found a bare spot on the stage and began. Almost every sentence was followed by lusty cheers. The applause at times was protracted and deafening. Only once was there any stirring about among the audience. I was considering the subject of Grover Cleveland. I spoke of his slipping his collar over his head without unbuttoning it, of his having special chairs made to sit in, of his buying his breeches by the acre, and of his using the microscope to

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY.

THE place where I expected to deliver my next address was a locality where the Democrats outnumbered the Republicans three to one. The State Committee were reluctant about appointing a meeting at that place, as it was considered uncertain about getting a crowd. I had anticipated talking to empty benches, and my surprise can be imagined when upon coming to the hall I found the entrance blocked with a large crowd that could not get in and the entire hall stuffed almost to suffocation. The stage had been festooned with evergreens. The speaker's desk was decorated with a bouquet of roses and the atmosphere laden with perfume. As I marched down the aisle, led by the local chairman, a mighty shout arose from the vast throng and I felt transported like a superior being, to whom the multitude delighted to pay reverence. When I arose to speak, deafening applause thundered through-

out the hall. Never before had I received such an ovation, and I swelled up for the greatest effort of my life. I began, stating my delight in meeting such a vast assemblage, and my gratitude for this opportunity to expound the noble principles of the great Republican party. Just then a half dozen men seated near the stage rose and bolted for the door, one of them exclaiming: "Oh, hell!" This movement attracted the attention of the entire audience, who laughed and tittered. This disconcerted me, but I raised my voice and said: "I notice that the Democrats are already on the run." My remark evoked no applause. Then I started again on my subject the best I could, and stated the questions at issue in the campaign. As soon as I had done so another squad arose and rushed for the door. This was the occasion for more applause from the audience. I remarked: "It does not take long to fill small vessels." My comment fell with a dull thud, creating no response. It is a rule among actors that when one of them finds his manner is not pleasing to his audience he makes the sharpest change of which he is capable. So I, in my discomfiture, quit the argumentative strain and attempted pyrotechnics. I spread the wings of the great American eagle. I perched upon the

loftiest peaks and was about to scream gloriously when about one-third of the audience arose en masse, uttering loud murmurs of displeasure and otherwise acting as if they were terribly disgusted, and by their departure left a large portion of the hall entirely vacant. When this occurred I stopped my pyrotechnics to remark: "When shot is thrown among a crowd of curs those only howl that are hit!" This elicited no response except hisses. I observed the crowd had gone out in bunches and the thought suddenly flashed into my mind that this was a concerted plot to break up my meeting. So I changed my tone again. I summoned to my aid all my powers of invective. I stated that in my youth I had been a missionary among the toughest of the tough and was familiar with the rascallions that infest the Five Points at New York, and the White Chapel district at London; that I was accustomed to bear with the wickedness and degradation of the most deformed imps of hell that disgrace the earth, but in my opinion there was a depth of meanness so low that these miserable creatures had never reached it; that the limit of total depravity might be claimed by these scoundrels who had come to a public meeting with the deliberate intention of disturbing it, thus prevent-

ing decent people from considering the great public questions of the day. While finishing this period a general stampede occurred and all that remained of my audience was less than one hundred, who evidently were Republicans, and all that had attended in good faith. My feelings were indescribable. To say that I was mad seems inadequate. I experienced more kinds of interlacing emotions, all of which were unpleasant, than ever before in my life. My face became blood-red, my voice trembled and I wanted to kick the entire Democratic Party into a vapor, but with a supreme effort I controlled my feelings, thinking that the end had been reached in the plot to annoy me. I started again on the discussions of the issues when suddenly the lights went out and left the room in darkness. Then I was obliged to stop. The chairman left the stage to find out the cause and tried to locate the place where the gas could be turned on, the door at that place was locked, and before any one could be found who could unlock the door the remaining few had left the hall and thus ended the meeting.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GREAT DEBATE.

WHEN I arrived at my next appointment, I was asked if I was willing to meet my opponents in joint discussion.

"Certainly," I said.

"When?" was asked.

"Any time, at once, as soon as possible," I answered.

"Where?" was the next question.

"Anywhere, in town, in the country, in the theatre, in the woods, in the cornfields, everywhere."

"Will you meet the Union Labor candidate and the Prohibition candidate?" was the next interrogatory.

"Of course," I said. "I am burning with desire to meet any of the enemies of the great Republican Party at any place and under any circumstances." Arrangements were accordingly made for a four-handed discussion in which each

party was to be represented. The theatre was packed, moderators selected and each party allowed forty-five minutes. The Democratic speaker was to open the discussion in a forty minutes' address and be permitted to close in one of five minutes. He was a round-headed, red-faced brunette, with short, curly hair, pop eyes and a squatty appearance. He waddled out on the stage like a great toad and began. He said that the Republican Party had been conceived in sin and spawned a bastard and had always lived in violation of the law. That it had schooled itself in crime until it had attained a perfection without a parallel. That it had always nominated men fit to effect its nefarious purposes, and in the selection of Benjamin Harrison it had procured a tool especially adapted to the execution of its wicked designs. He characterized the Republican standard-bearer as a manikin who was doing business in the great name of his grandfather, but who in reality was nothing but a shriveled hypocrite so cold in heart and selfish in purpose that his touch would freeze a lizard in mid-summer. The Democratic Party, he claimed, had given birth to the nation, and had by its courage in war and counsel in peace held the torch of civilization above the futile efforts of the Repub-

lican Party to extinguish it. That the Democratic Party, true to its unfailing instincts, had selected from its band of patriots the brightest star in its galaxy, and now invited all good and wise men to follow this new Star of Bethlehem into the harbor of peace and prosperity. It being a large party in soul and numbers, it had nominated a large man to represent it. But the Republican Party, being small in both these respects, had picked out a little animated specimen of an abortion and stuck him on the ticket where he had to be seen by a microscope. "Why," said he, "if our candidate should accidentally step on the little contemptible Republican candidate you would hear a slight crack, smell a little stench, and then the Republican convention would have to assemble and choose another standard bearer; and he is liable to do it, gentlemen; he will do it, and don't you forget it." After he had finished his vicious tirade it became my turn. I claimed the gentleman speaking for the Democratic Party had mistaken the question at issue. The fitness of a candidate for office could not be determined by the hay scales. That it was not a question of beef, but of brains. That the people of these United States needed more patriotism instead of avoirdupois. "When the country was

in danger," I asked, "who rushed to its rescue, the candidate with the great corporosity or the one with the great ancestry? Why, gentlemen, when Benjamin Harrison was standing with tearful eyes on the battlefield of Resaca, with his sleeves rolled up, binding the bleeding wounds of his mangled comrades, where was the Democratic candidate? I am astonished at the audacity of the gentleman in assuming that the Democratic Party has ever done anything for the cause of national honor. Everybody knows that the Democratic Party is a collection of mental, moral and financial wrecks, who long ago made a general assignment to the devil and went into hopeless moral bankruptcy. Why, gentlemen, every church spire in the nation points like a guideboard to the Republican Party. To vote the Republican ticket is the only way to gain happiness and prosperity either here or hereafter."

A voice in the audience yelled: "What do you say of the Union Labor Party?"

"It is too small to be seen by the naked eye," I answered. "It has no existence except in the distempered imagination of a few dreamers. If the gentleman who claims to represent it will swell it up enough so that I can see it, I will tell him what I think of its fate. At present it is too small

to either beat or bury, and I am content to let the wind blow it away."

"What of the Prohibition Party?" asked another.

"It is simply another device of the devil to aid the Democratic Party," I answered. "It is composed of cranks that nobody can turn. They can neither be bought, bulldozed, persuaded or convinced, but delight in perching themselves out on the dry limb of a single idea, while they watch the great procession of human progress pass by, refusing either to aid the right or to resist the wrong."

The Union Labor champion then took the floor. He said that he was willing to admit all the Democratic speaker had said against the Republican Party, and all the Republican speaker had said against the Democratic Party. He regretted, however, that these gentlemen should spend so much time in repeating what everybody knew. That he did not intend to waste his strength in trying to show which of these old parties were the most corrupt. "Carrion is carrion," said he, "whether it be the carcass of a dead hog or a dead skunk." He invited his audience to come away from these putrid old parties that he might show them the rosy face of the young and beau-

tiful Union Labor infant. He admitted that the Union Labor party was small—but he said it was not so small but the Republican speaker might see it with his naked eye were he not blinded by political prejudice and made near-sighted by ignorance, and if the prospect of a post-office did not hide it from his view. He further said that the Union Labor Party had been born out of the necessities of the people. Such patriots as Wendell Phillips and Peter Cooper had acted as its wet nurses and it would grow into glorious manhood and power, while an outraged people were engaged in holding their noses and scraping the rotting remains of the Democratic and Republican organizations from places of trust and casting them into the cesspool of oblivion.

The orator for the Prohibition Party was a woman, wild-eyed and wiry. Time had veneered the cheeks of her maidenhood with impenetrable brass. With one flash of her eyes she swept the deck and began. She said she had been amused at this sham-battle between rascals. In public they would tear each other's hair; in private they would drink together out of the same decanter, over the same bar. Alcohol was the inspiration of each, the saloon-keeper, their patron saint, and

the dram-shop their recruiting station. "What," she asked, "are platforms when framed by drunkards? What are laws when executed by sots?" She admitted that the Union Labor Party was an infant and might grow, but declared it had the birthmark of King Alcohol on its brow, and unless it joined the Prohibition Party and signed the pledge it would be washed by the tide of intemperance into hell. She therefore exhorted all the other parties to withdraw their candidates and make the election of the Prohibition Party's candidate unanimous and then save the nation from being drowned by intoxicating drink. She declared that the fate of humanity hung dangling to the Prohibition ticket, and that every church would be closed, every Sunday-school scattered, every schoolhouse torn down and the whole nation become one vast saloon; that the Star Spangled Banner would be torn from the Goddess of Liberty and be used to wipe beer mugs unless the Prohibition Party was put in control.

The Democratic speaker then took five minutes to close the discussion. He had remained quiet during the cudgeling his party had received, but the expression of his face showed plainly that he was collecting venom for his last speech, and

when the Prohibition orator had finished, he arose and made the feathers fly. He said: "It makes my blood boil to hear the party of Jefferson and Jackson calumniated by the dregs and scums of rascality. Where last year was this wind-broken and weather-beaten champion of Republicanism? He was whining anarchy and socialism in that defunct lunatic asylum called the Greenback Party. Where was he the year before? In the Democratic Party, turning the searchlight on the high crimes and misdemeanors of the Republican organization. Now he has returned like a dog to his vomit and become the filthy mouthpiece of Republicanism and has hired out to spit filth on his former political friends and associates." At the end of every sentence the speaker was loudly cheered and the atmosphere became too sultry for me. I arose and asked the privilege of an explanation. Cries of "Sit down!" "Let him speak!" etc., came from the audience. I then spoke with great fervor. "My malicious political enemies have invented and peddled concerning me, slimy slanders that may well make hell groan with envy. But of all the vile and malicious lies heretofore invented to defame me, this last charge that I have been a Democrat is the cruelest and most unfounded. I know that I have committed many

offenses and some that may extend beyond the pale of Divine mercy, but I have never descended low enough in the scale of human degradation to become a Democrat!" This statement turned the tide of applause in my favor. The Democratic leader saw he had given me an advantage by making a false charge. "I am glad I was mistaken," he said. "I hope the Democratic Party has never been and never will be disgraced by his membership." Then turning to the Labor Union candidate he continued: "Yonder sits another sweet specimen of the slanderers of the Democratic Party. Last year he was slobbering around the Democratic headquarters trying to get the Democratic Party to unite with his party. If the Democratic Party is so corrupt, why does he want to get in bed with it? If it is such a filthy carcass why does he seek to suck its breath?" The Union Labor speaker then interrupted by answering: "I didn't propose to marry the Democratic Party; I merely wanted to take the old Democratic skunk by the tail and use it to knock out the brains of the old Republican Party." This statement set the house in a great uproar. When the noise had subsided the Democratic speaker continued: "Yes," he said, "the hired liar of the Republican Party and the un-

principled lunatic of the Labor Party have the adjustable hide of the tree-toad that takes the color of any bark that it happens to be on. Such creatures are fit to defame the party that invented and patented statesmanship and converted the dreary wilderness of North America into a garden of plenty. Their condemnation may well be accounted the highest praise, and I endure it with complacency; but there is a limit beyond which endurance is impossible; that limit is passed, and I am tempted to stop my ears and flee from the forum that I may escape from the rantings of that female screech-owl who represents the alleged Prohibition Party. This was more than the Prohibition champion could endure. Quick as a flash she sprang across the stage and grabbed the Democratic speaker by the hair. One of the moderators caught her and succeeded in disentangling her fingers from the speaker's curly locks. "I'll teach him! I'll teach him to call me a screech-owl!" she exclaimed, as she brandished her fists in the air and shook her head. "He's nothing but a low-lived, blear-eyed, bottled-nosed Democrat, and I'll scratch his eyes out if he calls me a screech-owl again!" One of the moderators arose and announced as soon as he could make himself heard above the confusion

that the time had expired. The great joint discussion was declared finished. The large audience filed out of the hall and returned to their respective homes, the members of each party declaring that its champion came out ahead, and all were unanimous in the opinion that they had listened to a great political debate.

CHAPTER X.

OUT IN THE RAIN.

I WAS well acquainted with the chairman of the committee of the county where I was next to speak. He was a member of the State Central Committee. He had often urged me to accept an appointment in his county, and it was at his request that the State Central Committee had sent me there. My friend had assured me that my reception there would be a great ovation and that the population of the county would turn out en masse to hear me, hence I looked forward to my meeting with great expectations. I felt certain of my power to stir all the passions in the political breast and score a great triumph. Upon my arrival I heard no brass band serenading the incoming train. I looked in vain among the throng at the station for the familiar face of the chairman. A 'bus driver said, "Hotel, sir?" I went to a hotel. The landlord was ignorant of any meeting. I went to the office of the Republi-

can paper and found my appointment had been changed to a small town in the northern part of the county. With some chagrin I took the next train for the place. Upon arriving there I found that the appointment had been changed to a country schoolhouse in another part of the county. I again boarded the train and reached the nearest depot to said schoolhouse. After making some inquiries I was directed to the house of a prominent Republican who was reputed to be the township committeeman. His house was about a mile distant. I walked to it, only to find that another committeeman had been appointed in his place. The newly appointed committeeman lived about a mile and a half distant in another direction. In the meantime night had set in with a gentle rain. The people at the house told me the direction to go. The ex-committeeman said he would have been glad to go along with me but for his daughter, who had gotten a sand-burr imbedded in her neck while eating a piece of frost-bitten watermelon and was in a serious condition, having had her windpipe cut and a tube inserted through which to breathe, and he did not dare to leave her. I assured him that he was excusable and started off alone. The way was very dark and muddy, but I pressed on, wading through the mire,

searching for the house of the committeeman. At last, after much wandering, I found the place. The house was dark. Two great dogs rushed out, growling and barking. One of them sprang at me furiously. I struck him on the head with my umbrella. He howled and retreated a little but stood in the doorway, so that I could not get near enough to knock. I stood outside and yelled. At last a lank, butternut-colored fellow came to the door, naked, with the exception of his shirt, and as he drove the dog away said, "What do you want?"

"Are you the Republican Township Committeeman?" I asked.

"Well, ya-as," he drawled out.

"My name is Wilcox; I was sent into this township to make a speech to-night. Do you know where they hold the meeting?"

"The meeting was to be in the schoolhouse yonder," he said, pointing to the typical white box country schoolhouse.

"Why isn't it lighted up?" I asked.

"No use," he said. "You're the only man in Iowa who would be fool enough to attend a political meeting such a night as this. You will have to excuse me, I'm catching cold. I must go back to bed." So saying, he shut the door and

left me to trudge back to the depot through the darkness and the rain. I arrived at the station very wet, veneered with mud and filled with disgust. The agent had gone and the depot was locked. No train was due until three o'clock in the morning. I had six hours to wait. I was compelled to keep moving on account of the cold and my wet clothes. So like a sentinel of wretchedness I paced to and fro on the platform of the depot. One by one the weary hours dragged away, and at last three o'clock came but no train. How late the train would be I could not tell. I dared not leave the depot lest it might arrive during my absence. Finally I saw its headlight in the distance and it looked more beautiful to me than any light I had ever seen. Eagerly I awaited its approach when, to my amazement and disappointment, it did not stop. Again I paced the platform. The words spoken by the committeeman relating to my folly seemed to be true. I communed with myself thus: "What do these men care for me? Nothing. What do they care for the country? Less. Why do they hold political meetings? Simply to hold jobs. I've a comfortable home and a good law practice. Why should I tramp through sand-burrs, mud and jimpson-weeds, to talk politics to fel-

lows, who don't care enough about hearing me to come out through a rain?" Then came thoughts of how the soldiers, inspired by love for my country, had endured to save it, the greatest of hardships. Having eaten a supper of hard-tack, they often laid down in the snow and awakened to find minie-balls for breakfast. I recalled the patriots at Valley Forge, who left the bloody prints of their bare feet upon the frozen ground. Of Jackson and his brave men who fed on acorns dug in the snows of winter while fighting to sustain the nation's life. What were my sufferings compared with these hardships? How insignificant! I felt ashamed of myself for complaining. Presently the clouds cleared away, morning dawned, the sun arose in golden glory, the autumn woods on the hillside bloomed like a flower garden, and when the train came I boarded it with renewed courage to meet my next appointment.

CHAPTER XI.

THE COLD EYE AND THE SYMPATHETIC FACE.

At one of my meetings I was embarrassed by the presence of a thin man who sat in the front seat and gazed at me with a cold and unwavering glance during the entire time of my address. His optics seemed to chill me with their gaze. I felt as if he was exploring my very marrow. At no time did he exhibit any feeling except that of a keen and curious attention. I struggled hard to inspire him with emotion. I played upon every chord which my imagination could strike. I ran my voice from the lowest to the highest notes on the scale. I turned and twisted my body. I swung my arms like flails. I made all kinds of grimaces. I stamped my feet and clapped my hands. I quite destroyed the speaker's table by mauling it. I called on heaven and hell promiscuously. I invoked all kinds of angels, saints and devils, but this thin-visaged, solemn-looking individual, with the cold eye, never relaxed his gaze

or showed the slightest sign of feeling. After the meeting had adjourned and I had retired to my couch for slumber I could not dismiss from my mind the appearance of this auditor, but like the all-seeing eye of the Omnipotent, his blue, icy optics were glaring upon me out of the darkness, and when I fell asleep they still haunted me in my dreams.

When I began to speak at my next appointment I was surprised to note that this same man was there and located directly in front of me. It is always an embarrassment for a speaker to know that persons who have already heard his address are in his audience where they can discover he is but speaking a piece. He then feels compelled to change the character of his address. So the appearance of this person caused me to attempt a different speech from the one I had made before. My meanderings in unfamiliar fields were accompanied by much stumbling, but fortunately I had a few jokes left that I had not exploited at the previous meeting, and I used these as milestones. I filled in the places between them with commonplace matter and managed to put in the usual time. My listener with the congealed face sat as immovable as at the first meeting, but I

thought there was in his cold glance an additional appearance of interest.

When on the third night I found him waiting for me I became greatly worried as to what I could say that would be new and interesting to this person. My stock of stories was exhausted. Every witticism had become stale. All my flights of rhetoric had flown, and unless I worked over the old material I must remain dumb. So I spouted forth a kind of hodge-podge, made up largely of the other addresses, varying the expressions so that I hoped that their similarity would not be noticed. While speaking, my mind wandered and I trembled for my fate lest this ghastly individual should attend my next meeting. I asked myself, again and again, what was his object in thus following me through the country and harassing me with his presence. I resolved when the meeting was over to approach him and inquire. This I did, with fear and trembling. I approached him and extending my hand, which he took reluctantly, said: "My friend, I have been greatly gratified to see you at so many of my meetings. Will you kindly inform me to what I shall attribute this honor?" He said: "I am a professor of anthropology. I am collecting data on freaks. I thought the first

time I heard you that you were the most remarkable liar that I had ever known, and I had the curiosity to see if you could tell your story twice alike, and I must say that my subsequent observations have confirmed my first impression."

Every public speaker will admit his obligation to the sympathetic face. Those who speak extemporaneously and those who have prepared their addresses in skeleton form and rely upon the audience for inspiration while selecting language to cloth their ideas take especial delight in seeing some sympathetic face. At a certain meeting which I addressed I was greatly attracted by a portly gentleman. His face seemed most sympathetic. After I had talked a few moments he claimed my full attention, and all my remarks thereafter were directed to him, and I was entirely oblivious of the fact that there were others in my audience. So happy did he appear to be made by everything I said I was at once put in a very easy frame of mind. Never had my ideas flowed so freely; never had I cavorted about with such grace; my voice seemed like heavenly music and my vocal organs played as easily and softly as an Aeolian harp. It was ecstasy to see the full, round face of this sympathetic auditor wreathed in such delighted smiles

at everything I said. How I wished I could have such a person at every meeting! What would I not give to have such a person before me as a muse to fill my mind with merry thoughts and heavenly visions? The hour and one-half occupied passed like a lover's holiday. Alas! too quickly spent. When the meeting adjourned I rushed to this charming person and seized him warmly by the hand. I said: "How glad I am to meet a good Republican who can sympathize with me in my views." He begged my pardon and stated he was a Democrat. I expressed surprise that a Democrat should appear to take such delight in my address. He said: "I have greatly enjoyed your speech. When a man opposes my views I enjoy seeing him make a fool of himself."

The foregoing pages contain accounts of a portion of my twenty-four appointments in Iowa. I do not think it advisable to continue further the narrative of the Iowa campaign lest I weary the reader. Much would be a repetition of what has been written with but slight variations. The accounts heretofore given may well serve as samples of the whole. Fully half were failures, owing to the inefficiency of the local or State committee. Sometimes my meetings were advertised by a three-line notice stuck in an obscure part of

a weekly paper among the death notices, or "'til forbid ads." At times I was placed on the breezy side of a barn to speak against the north wind. At other times I held my meeting in dingy Republican clubrooms, situated on the third floor of a building where none but the Republicans could be expected to enter. Occasionally I was smothered with attention, but often frozen with neglect. I saw enough to convince me that the Republican organization in Iowa was in the primary department in arranging political rallies. Men of little capacity and less time for such business procured themselves to be selected as committeemen, and then went to sleep or off on a visit, and allowed the machine to rust. To announce a meeting they would issue a bill about the size of the human hand, and hang it in the east wind or paste it on the mud. They would describe the speaker as a "good talker" and thus damn him in advance by faint and indifferent praise. They would often forget to unlock the hall in time for the meeting or would neglect to have a fire built in it. They would stay with the speaker from morning until night and deprive him of an opportunity to rest or to collect his thoughts, when they ought to have been hustling for a crowd. The average Republican committeeman is a sluggard on whom

no amount of cursing can make an impression and no amount of pleading can stir. There are, of course, some refreshing exceptions, and when the stumper meets one he is given new courage to continue his task. The State Central Committee does not usually begin to make appointments until a week or ten days before the opening of the campaign. Then the secretary takes a map of Iowa, and picks out a lot of towns which he thinks are suited to the caliber of the speaker, makes the appointment and dictates to a stenographer a form letter to be sent to the chairman of each county telling him of the appointment. These letters may be started one week before the meeting is to be held. The chairman in one county may be out of the State, in another may live several miles from the post-office and the notice not be received until after the time set for the meeting. In another locality he may be a man who couldn't compose an auction bill and wouldn't if he could. Sometimes it will happen that the appointment has been placed on the night of a circus or it falls on the only night in the week when the hall is engaged. Often the speaker sent is the very one the people do not care to hear. It occasionally happens that the secretary or his stenographer will fail to send notices to the lo-

calities and the speaker will get there unheralded. Usually the chairman and secretary of the State Committee are men of small capacity and less experience, and they sit huddled together in one or two little rooms surrounded by a crowd of loafing politicians who absorb their time and attention with irrelevant and redundant stories as they sit and smoke campaign cigars. The conduct of a political campaign in a State is a great business. The chairman should be an experienced business man, fertile in planning and swift in executing. He should see that all the joints and cogs in the machine are well oiled and in perfect working order. He has no time to write letters, sign receipts or keep books. He should be accessible only to those who have business with him. The secretary should superintend the execution of the work laid out by the chairman. He should have charge of the employes, see that they are at their posts and performing their functions. He also has no time for visiting. He should not attempt to perform the minor details of the work. He should, however, see that it is thoroughly done by others. A system should be in operation that will insure the advertising of every meeting and the proper distribution of every political document and the casting of every vote. If any

locality has elected a chairman who is not prompt in the discharge of his duty, he should be set to one side and some one else sent in advance of the speaker to make the proper arrangements. Meetings should not be appointed on the request of the locality unless the State Committee is prepared to assume the burden and attend to the local arrangements. In the Harrison-Cleveland campaign, I suffered much in Iowa at the hands of sluggards in the committees; of this I will not speak further. I was pleased when my four weeks had ended and the time had come to take the train to Chicago, where I hoped to win great renown.

CHAPTER XII.

A WOMAN WINS.

THE political speaker who has received his training in the country and is called to Chicago to practice his art will experience many startling surprises. He will find most things different from what he expected. How shall I express the swell of emotion that animated my soul as I planned for my Chicago campaign? What can so thrill and exhalt the human mind as the thought of winning widespread and eternal fame? "This," I said, "is the chance for which I have so long waited—at last I can reveal to the startled senses of mankind the great powers which I have so long felt were in my possession." Although conscious of transcendant genius as an orator, yet I was determined to add to my glittering natural gifts all the acquired graces that could come from careful preparation. I determined to leave nothing undone to furnish my mind for this great occasion. I read Greek poetry, oratory

and philosophy until the Market Place at Athens and the Groves of her Academy were as familiar as the courthouse square of the village where I was reared. I conned the orations of the great Cicero and his contemporaries until the Forum at Rome was as common as the playground of my boyhood. Nor did the mighty English orators fail to receive my attention. I taught my tongue to repeat their powerful phrases until an oration of Burke's became as easy as a Mother Goose lullaby. I stood with Webster on Bunker Hill—with Lincoln at Gettysburg—and with Beecher at Fort Sumpter. I determined to excel all of these. The great addresses of these mighty masters, ancient and modern, were but frail and staggering affairs compared to what I purposed to perform.

To equip myself further I devoured the unabridged dictionary; I absorbed encyclopedias; I emptied into my mind the bibles of the pagan and the Christian worlds. I delved neck deep into science, on every subject from flowers to stars. Having thus supplied myself with ancient and modern lore, I wrote my great oration. With delicate care I carpentered and joined my sentences, dove-tailing each into the other and stringing them together so as to gradually lift the hearer to a climax which should be

a veritable cataclysm. Nor did my care in composition exceed that in delivery. No fair one ever lingered longer before the glass to rig her armor for the amatory assault than I did to acquire a series of poses and gesticulations suitable to grace and reveal the vast ideas which I had dug so deep and flown so far to bring forth. Mighty were the triumphs which I felt would follow such elaborate preparations. In my mind's eye I could see myself standing upon the stage of some Chicago theatre; about me sat railroad kings, merchant princes, renowned theologians, eminent philosophers, famous warriors, and the mighty political leaders of that city. In front of me in the immense auditorium, where gallery rose above gallery, and box above box, until the sight was blinded by distance, would sit the beauty, wealth, fashion and intelligent citizenship of the great metropolis, with craned necks, peeled eyes and eager ears, anxious to drink in the honey of my words. Before the admiring gaze of this vast throng, full in the center of the spotlight, I stood—pouring forth a deluge of oratory upon the perfumed air, sufficient to strain every joint and mortise in the building from its concrete to its cornice, and make large beads of perspiration stand upon its frescoed ceiling. At times my au-

dience would be intoxicated by my words into delicious rapture. At other times some vast idea sweeping through the nerves and sinews of the great assembly would provoke such a storm of applause as would make the artillery of the skies seem but a mimic show. But the vast assemblage was but a drop in the ocean of human beings who should compose my audience. The quick reporters of the world's great newspapers were there, noting every word and gesture; they would send their reports on wings of lightning to the farthermost parts of the earth. On the morrow my name would be the fashion in every household that freckles the face of the globe.

My speech was delivered in a beer hall on Milwaukee Avenue. A pickpocket tried to steal my watch as I went in, and two confidence men attempted to sidetrack and rob me as I came out. My audience was composed of the drinking, the drunk, and the very drunk. The hall was poorly lighted, but what light there was struggled ineffectually to illumine the air laden with dense fumes of tobacco smoke, which was belched forth from the foul mouths of my audience; yet through the fetid air the highly colored noses of my hearers were at times visible. There was an incessant jabber and hub-bub, commingled with

maudlin gibberish and shocking profanity. An ancient layer of indescribable nastiness frescoed the ceiling and varnished the woodwork. Taken as a whole, the hall and its contents seemed about as much like hell as the machinery of vice and filth could make it. Had I prepared a speech to be delivered in heaven and had been called upon to deliver it in the infernal regions, I could not have failed worse in my preparations. So many others were billed to speak at the same meeting that I was allowed but fifteen minutes. I had determined to make an impression. I took for my theme the cruel barbarity of Cleveland's administration in his veto of private pension bills. Just as I was laying the foundation by referring pathetically to the hardships, dangers and sacrifices of the Union soldiers, a band marched into the hall followed by a Bohemian Club, yelling and hurrahing. This continued for five minutes. After this noise had ceased and before I had reached a point where I could make an impression the attention of the audience was claimed by a quarrel that was brewing in one corner of the hall, and by the time the police had quieted this disturbance my time had expired. I was followed on the platform by a woman who knew her audience and was well acquainted with

men generally. Upon taking the stand she indulged in a gesture which evoked great applause. Assuming that her audience were confined in their knowledge of language to profanity and slang, she filled the smoky air with oaths and purient and filthy insinuations couched in the latest slang. Frequently she would propose they drink to the health of some candidate and swing herself in a manner that seemed to inflame the passions of her auditors, either politically or otherwise. The half-drunken crowd went wild with delight. Every one of her salacious or profane illusions were cheered vehemently. When her time was up they compelled the chairman of the meeting to let her go on. Her bleared eyes beamed with exultation, and if she had felt any restraint at first it was gone now. She turned herself loose to the most reckless abandon and her audience did likewise. Then every sentence or ejaculation was responded to by thunderous applause, and every moment some enthusiastic auditor more zealous than the rest would jump up on his chair and yell, and propose three cheers for the woman. These would be given lustily for several minutes and then she would go on. When the filth became intolerable I left in disgust. Thus was I rudely awakened from my dream of Chicago glory.

CHAPTER XIII.

HO FOR INDIANA.

I LEFT Chicago for my first appointment in Indiana. At about ten the next morning when I was within twenty-five miles of the place, the train began to take on special cars filled with uniformed clubs and brass bands. A member of one of the clubs, dressed in tin armor, crowded into the seat beside me.

"Where is the crowd going?" I asked.

"Down to——" he said.

"What's going on?"

"A great Republican rally."

"Who speaks there?" I inquired.

"General Wilcox, of Iowa," was his answer.

"Is he a good speaker?"

"The greatest orator in the country."

"Strange I have just come from Iowa and I have never heard of him."

"If you'll stop off, stranger, and attend the rally, you will hear the best speech you ever heard

in all your life," said he, "or I'll pay your bill there."

"Perhaps I will," I said.

When we arrived at the depot there were two thousand people collected round it. Bands were playing. Several hundred young men and women were on horseback, prepared to march in the procession. Many large wagons had been lengthened for the occasion and surmounted with racks built so as to carry three tiers of young ladies who were dressed in the national colors. These were drawn by road engines. Some were singing and others hurrahing. The procession had formed and was waiting for the speaker to ride in the front carriage. No one knew me. I saw two tall men dressed in ulsters and wearing gray plug hats who were looking eagerly among those who came out of the cars. Presently I heard one say to the other, "I don't see any speaker." I approached them and said: "Gentlemen, whom are you looking for?" One of them replied, "We are looking for General Wilcox, from Iowa." "My name is Wilcox and I came from Iowa. I was sent here by the Republican Committee to make a speech."

"Then you are the man we are looking for; come with us," was the reply. The gentleman

took hold of my arm and led me to the speaker's carriage in which I rode. The business houses and private dwellings were decorated with banners and bunting, and Harrison's picture, if the proprietors were Republicans; if Democratic, Mr. Cleveland's, hung in the windows.

The whole country for twenty miles around had turned out. The Democrats as well as the Republicans had come. The men, women and children of the Republican faith wore Republican badges, those of the Democratic faith Democratic badges. The business of Indiana then was politics. Nearly everything else was neglected. Mine was the twenty-fifth rally held that year in that locality. A school mistress told me that she had gone to the schoolhouse every day the week previous to teach, but had been unable to do so on account of her having such enthusiastic political children in her school. She had ten scholars, four Democrats and six Republicans, all of whom were excused every day to attend political rallies. Whole families would start out from home the day before to attend a meeting to be held twenty-five or thirty miles distant and return the day after the rally in time to make a fresh start again that same day for another. Here the trials of the stumper were over as far as the com-

mitteemen were concerned. The political machine in Indiana at that time was the most remarkable appliance in the State. The Hoosier looks forward to the Presidential election as a great harvest. He may be sluggish and quiet at all other times, but then he rallies and hustles with superhuman unction. Every inch of the State is wind-swept for three months prior to the election by the strongest political orators in the nation. Every schoolhouse and all public buildings become battle-scarred fields where political champions froth and hiss. When I rode by farmhouses the children would run out and yell, "Hurrah for Ben!" or "Hurrah for Grover!" according to the political faith of the parents. When I had finished my speech the chairman and those on the platform would shake hands with me and then the men, women and children in the audience would come forward by the thousands to greet and congratulate me, all showing the warmest appreciation. I was billed for but one speech a day, but often after the close of my afternoon address many would urge me to speak in a city not far distant that evening. If I consented they would send couriers ahead on horseback to notify the people in that vicinity. When the couriers reached the city one would take a bell, another a

tin horn, the third a drum, and start along the street ringing the bell, blowing the horn, beating the drum and shouting, "General Wilcox speaks to-night at——" The Republicans on the route as they proceeded would fall into line until several hundred were accumulated and these would go through the principal streets, making a great noise. In less than an hour the largest hall would be packed. In some places I was advertised as colonel, in others as general. As I was a child during the war it was quite embarrassing to be called general or colonel. Often bills would cover the whole side of a barn, advertising to speak with me fifteen or twenty of the most celebrated men in the nation; United States Senators, Members of Congress and renowned orators, but there was no disappointment or surprise, for it seemed to be generally understood that I would be the only speaker present. The National Committee dubbed me colonel in making my appointments, but in many parts of Indiana this title was not large enough to satisfy. The political strife in Indiana is generally free from bitterness. A great rally is much like a Fourth of July celebration. The people get together to have a good time, and they have it. They are good-natured and intelligent. In every precinct there are some

who have nothing to sell except on election day, and then they look for the highest bidder. I was told by a candidate for Congress that in one locality in his district it was ascertained by polling the votes the year before that the number of "floaters" were about equally divided, and to save money it was agreed that neither party should buy any of them. He said the floaters perched themselves on fences and lounged around the polls all day until the polls closed at night for propositions that never came, swearing they would not vote unless paid for it, and they went home without voting. I had no small meetings or defective advertisements in Indiana. There were great crowds and congratulations everywhere; uniformed processions, miles in length by day, thousands marching in torchlight processions and other fireworks by night. Every sentence was punctuated by cheers.

CHAPTER XIV.

BEN HARRISON.

ON Saturday evening I arrived at Indianapolis. The city was illuminated by great flaring natural gas torches. Delegations were coming in and going out. Bands were playing and crowds were hurrahing. The tall business and office blocks were decorated from bottom to top with the pictures of Harrison and Cleveland hung in the windows. Political meetings were in progress in many places. It was hubbub and hullaballoo everywhere. The Denison House was the rallying center of the Republican Party. United States Senators, Members of Congress and noted campaign orators were hurrying in and out. The Chairman of the State Central Committee was harder to see than a Chinese mandarin. He had divided his labors with a score of lieutenants who were receiving and sending stacks of telegrams. Hundreds of speakers from abroad were tramping the State.

Thousands of local speakers were working their wind instruments in as many localities. The sinews of war were drawn from a main tap root running to New York and a myriad of small ones running into every part of the State. The State Committee was the collecting and distributing point. It was a tremendous machine which ran all night and stopped not for the Sabbath. The question raised everywhere was which shall it be, Ben or Grover? Irish speakers were haranguing the Irish to the tune of "Wearing of the Green." Dutch speakers were enthusing the Dutch to the tune of "The Watch on the Rhine." Campaign documents were flying like waste paper. "You must go and call on Ben," said the chairman of the committee on speakers, addressing me and another gentleman who had been on the stump eleven weeks. "If you will do so I will get you an invitation." He did as he said and we went. In a plain wooden house, shaped like a large box, situated on a back street, we found the little man about whom the people were making so much noise.

"General Harrison, this is Mr. Wilcox, of Iowa, a candidate for Presidential elector," said my companion as he introduced me. "I am glad

to see you, General," I said. "I have often described you to large audiences."

"Indeed," said he. "Many people are talking and writing about me now. Be seated, gentlemen, I have had a very busy time lately, so many delegations have called upon me." As he said this he humped himself down on his shoulders in a big, soft chair.

"General, this closes my eleventh week on the stump for you," said my companion.

"Indeed," said he. "By the way, gentlemen, you doubtless noticed the address I delivered to the traveling men the other day. In it you will find many valuable suggestions. The New York papers commented on it favorably, and I believe I will say some more on that subject."

"Yes, General, it is a very good speech," I said. "I heard it very favorably spoken of where I have been. I left home five weeks ago and have since been on the stump in much of Iowa and Indiana."

"Indeed!" he again ejaculated. "Let me ask you, gentlemen, if you noticed my address on protecting the negroes in the South. Many advised me to avoid that question, but it seemed to me worthy of serious consideration, so I opened

up on it and it has given the country the keynote of the campaign."

We admitted that we had read the address referred to and I said: "General, I had a nice meeting at Rockville yesterday."

"Indeed!" he exclaimed. "That is where I had my celebrated debate with Dan Vorhees; you doubtless have become familiar with its history."

"They are making great preparations for my meeting at Dana, Monday," I said.

"Indeed! That is where I often go hunting," said he. "I suppose you have read about my last hunt there." Thus the conversation proceeded. The little man was self-conscious to an extraordinary degree. He insisted in talking about himself all the time when we wanted to talk about ourselves. We tried frequently to sidetrack him, but all in vain. He took no interest in anything that either of us had done or was going to do, but with a simple ejaculation of "Indeed!" he would gather back onto himself as the subject to which his mind clung with such loving tenacity. During an hour's conversation he did not ask us where we came from, or whither we were going. He was not curious to learn what we had seen or what we proposed to do. He did not inquire when we came to town or when we would

leave, or whether we were married or single. He asked no questions in relation to friends of his anywhere. He did not offer us anything to eat, drink or smoke, nor did he introduce us to his wife or children. The whole time until we left was spent by him in a profuse consideration of himself. His manner was a mixture of dignity and exhaustion. There was a little of the stage-struck in his actions that indicated he considered himself on exhibition and as furnishing the whole show. When we arose he extended his little, cold hand and said, "Good evening, gentlemen." He did not say, "If I am elected and you come to Washington, come and see me."

"I feel chilly," said my companion, as we walked out into the darkness. "I wish I had stayed away."

"Is it possible," said I, "he is the man I have been describing to large audiences as standing among the wounded and dying, with tears in his eyes, binding the wounds of his fallen comrades?"

My companion said, "Why, that man would see his neighbors roasting in hell, turn his back, part his coat-tails and warm himself by the flames."

A lady at Indianapolis said, "I respect General Harrison very highly. He is a member of the church I belong to and I hope he will be elected,

but when he passes down the aisle by me I feel a cold chill run through my frame."

An old friend of Harrison's said, "Ben believes in the doctrine of foreordination. He has for many years believed he was destined to be the President of the United States, and if elected he will regard it as the fulfilment of the Divine plan and not the result of any labors expended by his friends in his behalf."

I confess my ardor was much dampened by my visit, yet I continued to talk for Harrison and the party until the close of the campaign. I was elected Presidential Elector and cast my vote for him for President and thus became a humble instrument in executing what he believed to be the Divine Will.

The electoral votes were counted, Harrison declared elected and in due time Grover handed the harness down to Ben and he put it on.

In the early spring following the great campaign I went to Washington to attend the Supreme Court of the United States. I found one of my associates on the electoral ticket had been appointed a commissioner in the Land Office, another a solicitor of the Treasury and others had been named for a foreign appointment. I neither asked nor expected anything, except that common

courtesy which every man expects from his friends. I visited the tomb of the Father of his Country amid the peaceful shades of Mount Vernon. I stood at the base of his monument and followed its white outlines upward until its lofty summit was lost in light. I stood before the statue of the martyred Lincoln and gazed with tearful eyes upon the thrilling impersonation of the Act of Emancipation. I beheld with rapture that great palace of marble and freestone called the Capitol Building, sitting upon a gentle hill, typifying the wealth, majesty and stability of this great nation. I entered its storied halls and saw where the masters of art had chiseled marble, moulded in enduring brass and spread on canvas the heroic forms and brave exploits of those who have made this nation great. I entered the Supreme Court room and at high noon beheld the greatest court on earth sit in sombre pomp. I then called at the Presidential Mansion and entered those honored portals hallowed by the residence of a long line of illustrious men, who had here toiled in shaping the destiny of the greatest republic the earth has ever seen. All that imagination can picture of human glory was there in its fulness, and, likewise, Ben was there. It was the occasion of his afternoon reception. The

doors of the reception room were thrown open and several hundred persons from all parts of the nation had come to see its chief magistrate. When the time arrived the ghost appeared. He stood on one side of the aisle looking as ghastly as an Egyptian hieroglyphic. The half-moons under his eyes were in their last quarter. He seemed the impersonation of stately distress, moulded in terra-cotta. He extended his clammy hand to the person nearest him, saying as he did so, "Glad to see you," and pushed him along in the aisle which led out of the building. Then followed, one by one, the persons present. Each approached and seized the icy appendage, gave it a convulsive shake and heard the same assurance, "Glad to see you," without the slightest symptoms of glee on his withered features. The President continued the operation, saying, as he wagged his right extremity, "Glad to see you! Glad to see you! Glad to see you!" etc., evidently bored exceedingly. I waited until the last. Finally I led up the rear and reached eagerly for his frosty palm. Without the slightest show of recognition he said, "Glad to see you."

"General," I said, "don't you remember me? I stumped Indiana for you. My name is Wilcox."

"Indeed," said he, and then looking as though

he was very much bored, he repeated, "I am glad to see you," pushed me along toward the exit, through which I disappeared. Ever since, when I have tried to hurrah for Ben, I have been afflicted with a spasm of the epiglottis.

CHAPTER XV.

POLITICAL ORATORY.

If the mighty Demosthenes should return to earth and take part in a Presidential campaign, if the great Greek should become as expert in the English language as he was in the tongue of the Athenians, if he should deliver an oration in the behalf of a Presidential candidate equal to his great address upon the "Crown," wherein he so ably defended himself, routed his adversaries and won eternal fame, I do not believe he could hold an audience unless the doors were locked.

If Rome's greatest master of rhetoric, Marcus Tullius Cicero, should attempt the like feat he would probably claim some attention while basting his opponents and holding them on the spit, but before he had finished it is likely that his yawning audience would vote him an intolerable bore. If Daniel Webster, whose commemorative addresses have no equals in the annals of mankind, should stand again on Bunker Hill, and with careful deliberation unfurl his majestic

periods for the edification of the common people on the subject of politics it is probable that his peroration would fall upon the backs of a fleeing audience.

The classic rules for cutting and fitting ideas and working majestic climaxes are found inadequate on the stump. There are no more rules in political oratory than there are in a dog fight. So many elements enter in producing the effect that anything like a system becomes impracticable. The address which goes like a rocket before one audience and finishes with a shower of stars will, before another, fail utterly. Nor will the same kind of an address please the same audience equally well at all times. The weather has a queer effect. After a bright day filled with enthusiasm, marching clubs, crowds hurrahing and brass music, followed by a display of fireworks in the early evening, the stumper is greeted with an immense audience who have worn themselves to exhaustion and his jokes and funny stories which were wont to create great emotion become as flat as stale beer. His rip-roaring appeals to patriotism and his graphic descriptions of thrilling events in the country's history fizzle away in hot, stuffy air without awakening any response, and just when he expects to secure the triumph of his life, he meets with the least appreciation.

On another day, when a drizzling rain has soaked all the fine feathers and regalia intended to blaze in the street parade, when all outdoor demonstrations have necessarily been abandoned and a few hundred disappointed and sick at heart have trudged through the mud and filth to listen to the address, when the orator has had the blues all day and vainly hoped that the shower would stop and believed it an unfavorable omen and wished that so few would attend that the meeting would be abandoned, yet in a half-hearted way he tries to speak, it is then he may find that the meeting turns out to be the most delightful one in the campaign. At the slightest excuse the audience becomes convulsed with glee, all jokes and stories go like wild-fire, and his hearers pass from mirth to tears in response to the sentiments in his address as readily as a good instrument answers to the touch of the master musician. When he has finished they cluster around him with an enthusiasm that knows no bounds and makes him feel that he has covered himself with glory. This is due to human nature, which soon tires of any mood and quickly goes from one extreme to the other. The rain had bottled up all enthusiasm during the day and when the time for the evening address came it was suddenly uncorked.

Notwithstanding these uncertain causes that

contribute to success or failure on the stump, there are other points which ought to be taken into consideration to make a successful campaigner. It is important that his countenance be illumed by a kind smile so that he may appear to enjoy himself while speaking; that he pass rapidly from one emotion to another; that his imagination gallop like a wild horse; his mind be in that condition where it sees everything in big figures and clear outlines; that he possess a capacity for mimicry, and perpetrate frequent surprises by his rapid transition from the grave to the gay, from the serious to the burlesque. There should be a certain framework in his address which holds it together. There are points which can never be omitted with satisfaction. He must put angel wings on his candidate and horns, hoofs and claws upon the candidate of the opposition; he must represent himself as being entirely free from bias or self-interest and swear profusely that his party is the nation's only hope. He must catalogue and highly color all the customary charges of misfeasance and bad faith made against the leaders of the opposition. He must glorify and decorate with garlands of flowers the prominent names that his party has kept upon the payroll. He cannot safely conclude without referring to the flag, and in the name of his coun-

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try's martyrs exhort his hearers to come to the "Lord's side," and help overthrow the emissaries of Satan, who are plotting by fraud to wrest the country's management from the hands of patriots and make it the prey of designing scoundrels. No voice sounds sweeter to the partisan who has reached the last stage of political madness than a charge of calumny against his political enemies. Like heavenly music in his eager ears is the assurance that in his candidates are found all the graces and virtues combined in the richest profusion. But more important than either manner or matter is a voice like a fog-horn that may be heard plainly by acres of people. The following will illustrate:

During this campaign of which I write, the National Committee assigned to the State of Indiana for one week a young lawyer from Iowa, whose fame as a political orator had not extended beyond the domain of his own State. It was with much hesitation that the Indiana State Committee accepted the appointment, and for fear that it might prove disastrous on account of the weakness and incompetency of the speaker, it assigned a former partner of Benjamin Harrison to speak at the same appointments and save the meetings. The gentleman so assigned by the State Committee had, by wide experience as an

editor, lawyer and political debater, become a master of refined and classic English. His venerable presence and psalm-like countenance, and his intimate relation with the candidate made his words sound like oracles and his sentences seem as if they were verified by an affidavit. It was in the shadow of this colossal figure that the unknown boyish campaigner was to stand. The young man had lungs, and this is the way he came out in the contest:

At the first meeting held in the afternoon the Iowan made the first speech, and the large audience in the open air grew larger every moment, as his voice echoed down the streets and alleys of the little city. Men, women and children, even dogs gathered from all directions to the spot, and they were held until the close of his address. When he had finished the gentleman sent by the State Committe to speak with him began, in slow, measured and soft accents, reeling off his musical cadences like the unwinding of a spool of silk. It was difficult for any but those close to the platform to hear or understand him. In less than ten minutes the great audience dissipated, except a scattered few. This was humiliating to the orator of wide renown. The next meeting being in the Opera House in another town that evening, he concluded that he would speak first.

Many of those who had been at the first meeting were present at this meeting, it being customary at that time for some to follow the speaker to the next appointment. When the audience saw that the old gentleman was to speak first they appeared to be disappointed. He had not proceeded farther than to state what he claimed were the issues of the campaign when cries came from different parts of the audience loudly calling for the young man to speak. So persistent were these that the young speaker had to take the stage and assure the audience that his colleague was about to deliver a great address and that he would not talk until that address had been given. Then the old gentleman was permitted to proceed. The crowd settled back in their seats as if disgusted, and soon began to straggle out of the hall. The speaker leisurely proceeded speaking his piece in tones like the still, small voice of conscience until he finished, and then the cries for the boy were furious. He stepped forth like a conquering hero, and when his clear, strong accents filled all the hall with its powerful tones it seemed to the before-weary listeners as if an archangel had come to deliver a Divine message. Soon the half-emptied hall filled again. Hundreds crowded into the aisles and on the stairways; every sentence was punctuated with thun-

derous applause. When the address was finished, hundreds rushed to the stage, shook his hand and expressed their great delight and admiration. Old soldiers, with tears in their eyes, nearly cracked his fingers with their powerful grasps. Old ladies and children stood around, smiling, anxious to get a touch of the hand or even a glance from the speaker. Meanwhile, the venerable old gentleman with the small voice stood off at one side, alone, neglected by everybody. He appeared dejected. His presence was entirely overlooked by the committee, and had it not been for the fact that the young man went out and gathered him in he might have been lost in the shuffle.

When the two speakers retired to the hotel that night, the old gentleman took the boy to one side and said: "I am going home; I don't think you need my assistance. I will tell the National Committee to assign you to Indiana until the close of the campaign."

This incident shows the importance of a strong voice on the hustings, and how a young man without reputation can, with his breath, blow away the old campaigner of great experience and wide renown who lacks the great essential, a powerful voice.

CHAPTER XVI.

DANGEROUS PRACTICES.

To avoid making a positive assertion, some speakers present their views by interrogatories propounded to the audience. Instead of affirming this or that to be true, they ask questions, not expecting that anybody in the audience will answer. Occasionally they are startled and suffer great annoyance by getting one.

Once a renowned speaker for the Democratic Party, familiarly known as Bill Allen, was delivering an address in a grove near Cedar Rapids, Iowa. This was many years ago, when the Democrats controlled the politics of that State. The young Republican Party had attained a considerable growth and was then, as now, the principal opponent. Mr. Allen began with the inception of the Republican Party and painted many of its acts in the blackest dyes. He lampooned its organizers and promoters as the vilest of the vile. After having exhausted himself on this in-

exhaustible subject he began to interrogate the audience. "Is there a Republican here?" he asked, contemptuously. "If in all this vast audience there be one Republican I would like to ask him how he feels when he looks at this record. How mean and contemptible and low-lived he must feel! I repeat the question: 'Is there a Republican here?'" An old man, stoop-shouldered, with thin face, long nose and small, squeaky voice, standing near the speaker's platform, whined out: "Yes, I am a Republican." "What!" exclaimed Allen, "you a Republican! My God! Tell us how you feel!" The old man squeaked out: "I feel like a kernel of wheat in a half-bushel of chaff!" As a matter of fact, a large part of the audience were Republicans, and the old gentleman's reply produced such an outburst of long-continued applause that it greatly confused the orator and abbreviated his speech.

QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE.

A stumper always incurs some risk when he permits persons in his audience to ask questions. Especially is this so when he has engaged in ridiculing his opponents. The audience then

takes delight in seeing the speaker struck with one of his own weapons.

When Horace Bois of Waterloo, Iowa, was a candidate for re-election to the office of Governor on the Democratic ticket, he was severely criticised by the Republican press for a speech he had made in New York wherein he asserted that it was unprofitable to raise corn in Iowa. This was called slandering the State, and some considered it a great blunder. A leading Republican speaker told his audience that while at Des Moines he visited the State Fair and found on exhibition the largest display of fine stock he had ever witnessed. All the animals were well-fed, sleek and happy, except one. This was a large donkey whose long ears were drooping and big tears were rolling from his large eyes. The speaker said he wondered at so much anguish and begged the noble animal to confide in him the cause. The donkey said: "I have been on exhibition at every State Fair in Iowa for the last five years and have always taken the prize as the biggest jackass in Iowa, and now Bois has beat me." This provoked much laughter and the speaker felt he had scored a great hit, when a Democrat arose and said: "I would like to ask the speaker if he was on exhibition at this Fair?" "Certainly

not," was the reply. "That explains it, then," said the Democrat. "You had bettry try for the prize next time." Such was the applause that followed this remark that it is probable the jack-ass argument was never used again.

"SWINGING THE BLOODY SHIRT."

When Grover Cleveland was first nominated President, the Republican press charged him with lack of patriotism because he had been drafted and hired a substitute. The young orators on the stump indulged in what was then a favorite theme called "swinging the bloody shirt." At a joint discussion, a Republican speaker, who at the time of the war was too young for military service, charge that Mr. Cleveland was either a coward or a traitor because he had not enlisted. His Democratic opponent, who had himself seen some military service, made the following reference to his Republican adversary: "Ladies and gentlemen, you must have greatly enjoyed the warlike address of my brave opponent. Perhaps you are not familiar with his military record. It is true that at the time of the great unpleasantness this bloodthirsty gentleman was in arms (laughter). He was a member of the infant-ry."

(Great applause.) The speaker then took his handkerchief and folding it in the form of a clout held it up by the corners and said: "And this, ladies and gentlemen, is the kind of regimentals that he wore." The applause was terrific, and when the noise had subsided the Democratic orator said: "My friend belongs to that class of warriors who enlisted just after the last rebel had laid down his arms, and will never surrender as long as peace endures."

A QUEER DEBATE.

An ambitious young Republican, wishing to make a great name for himself, challenged Henry Clay Dean, a gruff old Democratic war-horse of wide renown as an orator, to hold a joint discussion with him, offering to give Dean the right of opening and closing the debate. A great audience, largely Republicans, gathered to hear the contest. In an opening address of an hour in length Dean made a telling argument for the Democratic Party, then picking up his hat he stated: "That's all I care to say. If you want to stay and listen to this fool you may do so. I am going home." Then he left the hall and the Democrats in the audience followed him.

CHAPTER XVII.

EFFECT ON THE STUMPER.

My first ambition was to be President of the United States. Later, the job of ringmaster with a country circus would have satisfied me. When I first attended a political meeting my soul was torn with envy at the sight of the stumper standing in the glare of the footlights before a large audience who had spasms of delight in their admiration for him. The hope that I might some time become one almost burst the buttons on my vest. I was sure that heaven would then begin. In my exhilaration I overlooked the stinking breath which made great Cæsar faint. I knew not that a crowd could become as troublesome as a swarm of flies or mosquitoes. Nor did I know that the vociferous applause which sounds so sweet to the beginner would ultimately jar the nerves and make the head ache. Nor did I dream that the palaver used to soft-soap the novice would finally become rancid. That the cock

feather of political glory would become badly stained with fumes from kerosene torches. That the red fire covering the heavens with crimson would soon fade and leave a nasty smudge, and that the courted and coddled orator with the "silver tongue" would, after the votes were polled, be dropped as a discarded remnant of a faded pageant to nurse a campaign legacy in the form of bronchitis. Fame is always fleeting. It is but breath or vapor. Like the song that has been sung it becomes a reminiscence. No other kind of a reputation is so short in duration and so worthless while it lasts as that acquired on the stump. In the same town where vast multitudes yelled themselves into tonsilitis in my honor, three moons afterwards any tramp could have used my name as an alias and passed unchallenged. The very people who did the yelling would probably have refused to trust me for a week's board. The stumper's employment keeps him constantly on the rack. There is not a moment when he is at ease. If all circumstances unite in his favor he may have short paroxysms of pleasure, but they are but forerunners of painful disappointments. Soon he becomes weary of the brass bands, the formal greetings, the perfunctory conversations, the noisy crowds and finally of his own voice.

The jokes and stories once so bright and funny by frequent repetition seem so old and tottering that he feels ashamed to drag them out again and make them stand for another laugh. The full, round periods which he matched and polished with such tender care and made his bosom thrill, have lost their power and now make his lungs ache and his throat raw to launch them forth. And lastly, when he returns to his native city, thinking he has cut a wide swath across the continent and painted a new aurora borealis in the heavens, he is surprised to find that even his nearest neighbors do not know that he was out of town. The orator who was the sole speaker when ten United States Senators and Members of Congress were advertised, must now go before a justice of the peace and try a law-suit for five dollars. As he sits on his stool at the lunch-counter, eating his five-cent bowl of bread and milk, he thinks of the days when all the luxuries of the earth were set before him and he wonders where now are the prominent citizens whose attentions were so profuse as to destroy his appetite.

Considered as a question of personal gain, political workers have the heaviest and most unprofitable burdens, and the stumper holds the

charred end of the stick; but viewed from the point of patriotic service he is a pin-feather on the great American Eagle, and is entitled to be regarded as a part of the plumage of that glorious bird. From his breath is distilled the oil that lubricates the political machine, and whatsoever there be of worth in the popular government is partly due to him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VALUE OF STUMPER'S SERVICES.

We cannot estimate the value of the services of a stumper without inspecting that fictitious organism known as a political party. We must first ascertain the elements that enter into its composition and their relations to each other. The only permanent thing about such an institution is its name, yet the popular opinion is, that a political party is an immortal being which lived in the days of Thomas Jefferson and will continue its identity through generations of posterity. When the sun shall grow dim with age and burn low in its socket and the earth shall turn to a frozen globe and Gabriel shall appear in the clouds to summon the quick and the dead, there will doubtless be some sitting on the icebergs and shivering and demanding front seats because they belonged either to the party of Thomas Jefferson or Abraham Lincoln. This popular notion of the identity of the political party is easily

shown to be false. The men who compose such an organization are ever changing, as the drops of water in a river. Like the flowing stream which is sometimes clear and sometimes muddy, depending upon the environment, so the political party may at times be animated by lofty emotions and noble aspirations and at others be stagnant and putrid and reek with corruption. And this environment greatly changes as the years go by.

There is a kind of skeleton or framework about which the masses who follow the name of the political party cluster. This is composed of an aggregation of persons who make politics a business, either directly or indirectly. From its heart in the city of New York to its toes out in the wilds of the West, the blood of the political being is circulated by fellows whose sole inspiration is the hope of reaching the public crib. From the impecunious cultivator of a patch of desert who would like to carry the mail, get a post-office or be elected road supervisor, to the master of millions who would form a syndicate to purchase government bonds or issue national currency or finance a government contract, there is an infinite variety of chaps, little and big, who hope for special power and privilege and seek these for

the purpose of plunder. Closely allied with such are the great interests which we call the press, ranging from the mighty metropolitan daily with its vast circulation and over-shadowing influence to the little country weekly, with its few hundred subscribers, depending upon the county printing for its existence. Between these extremes are a legion of newspapers, journals and periodicals whose life blood is the pap that is extracted through the agency of the political machine These allied interests are bribed by their positions to perpetuate the name and organization of the party, and usually experience no serious difficulty in following and supporting the ticket and advocating the creed adopted by the convention, however frequently it may be changed. This aggregation really constitute the party, although they cast but a small portion of the votes polled for its candidates. There is another element of great importance which is not properly a part of the political party itself, for it has nothing to say in its management and receives no profit from its successes. I refer to those who vote as their fathers voted, asking no questions and giving no reasons, and stiffen with pride as they announce that they never scratch the ticket. These should be inventoried as the chattels of the organization,

who, like any dead weight, can be pushed around and managed to suit the purpose of the party. For these no brass bands are hired, no public meetings are held, no arguments are necessary, for, like loaded dice, they can always be relied upon to fall the same side up. There is, however, a class of people every year becoming more numerous who do not expect to be benefited directly by the triumphs of any party, nor do they expect to get offices for themselves or for their dependant relatives or friends. They do not recognize the claims of any political master, and go silently to the polls and vote as their conscience dictates. It is such who disturb the dreams of the politician. How to harvest their votes when they are needed is the conundrum with which he struggles. As a bait, platforms are constructed and reconstructed, filled with specious promises and sounding phrases. To reach them, newspapers are filled with partisan editorials, and special pleas, urging support for the ticket. Many of these seldom read these editorials and cannot be reached except through the agency of political rallies. To get ready for the autumn election, the political manager begins in the spring. When he commences, the party spirit is at a low ebb and must be worked up in behalf of the ticket. To

accomplish this, the old reliable political mossbacks are wakened from their winter's slumber and galvanized into action. They are pushed out to carry banners, torches and fill the air with political language. Along with these, as a sort of mouthpiece, trots the stumper. In a few months, what was at first a lot of sluggards approaching a comatose state, becomes an aggregation of excited political madmen, who call their opponents the vilest names and accuse them of the most infamous crimes, and by their ferment and frenzy stir up that body of voters who paid but slight attention to the press. These gradually are drawn into the maelstrom of agitation and listen to the effervescence of the stumper. He, surrounded by a large coterie ready to applaud all his utterances, is glorified by the press who expects to profit by his success, is provided with music from glee clubs and brass bands, is made the center of attraction in a great audience, and thus has an opportunity, by appealing to every emotion and making all kinds of assertions, to greatly affect the minds of the independent voter. Sometimes he can raise such a storm as to tear from its moorings an old hulk that the opposite party supposed was safely anchored in its back bay. I know one case where a persistent stumper by an

argument of an hour and three-quarters got every voter, except two, in the audience of one hundred and fifty, to join a political club in his favor. When he began there were but four in the audience that agreed with him politically. The practiced butcher knows just where the thrust will cut the vital vein, and the skilful stumper knows exactly what to say to touch the voters' hearts. He always has the satisfaction of knowing that if he fails to win votes from the opposition and does not change the position of the independent voter, he has, nevertheless, in some degree intensified the zeal of his political friends.

Turn loose upon a country township a practical political stumper who has a reputation sufficient to draw an audience and he will be able in a few meetings to change its political complexion if the political forces were nearly equally divided, when he began. I have known several instances, where, by sheer force of oratory, the majority of thousands in the congressional district have been changed to a minority by the efforts of one man against the united opposition of money and newspapers circulated through the whole district.

Never before in the world's history has there been so great an opportunity for a man with strong lungs and rapid utterance to win politi-

cal power. The political manager who fails to take into account the necessity of training and maintaining an efficient corps of stumpers must sooner or later lose by his mistake. As the years pass by the numbers of independent voters increase, and the necessity for stump speakers becomes greater. Increased intelligence will improve the qualities of the arguments and appeals made from the stump, but the time will never come when the spoken word, having behind it a zealous and powerful personality, will not strike deeper into the human heart than any printed communication, even though the letters are as large as the side of a barn.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SURVIVAL.

If some political Rip Van Winkle should awaken from a twenty years' slumber he would be startled by many of the changes which have occurred in the political world. He would see the republic made an empire, the "Dollar of our Daddies" turned to gold, the President an arbiter of nations, the world's financial center moved from London to New York. He would behold the young giant of the Western world become a veritable colossus, whose shadow falls athwart the main, and fills the earth with wonder. But he would miss many familiar voices so often heard upon the stump, whose glowing words have echoed around the globe; Conkling, the courtly; Ingalls, the severe; Blaine, the magnetic; Sherman, the profound; Ben Butler, the majestic; Ingersoll, the entrancing; McKinley, the convincing; Tom Reed, the sarcastic, and many other mighty ones garnered in death's harvest. Campaigns have come and gone; parties have triumphed and have

met defeat; the assassin's hand has nullified the freeman's vote; the car of progress moved by leaps and bounds till commerce, the mighty Ajax of the modern world, has harnessed lightning for his pack-horse and made it his errand boy. New issues have filled the land with ferment and subsided like the uneasy sea. Heroes have climbed to towering heights and fallen low again. Systems have been shaken, old land-marks wiped away, the Constitution's meaning stretched, the pillars of the nation moved to find a larger basis for expansive growth. But in the shifting sands of change and time, like some vast pyramid about whose base the desert drifts and on whose lofty peak the lightnings play, undaunted and unshaken stands the eternal interrogation point—the tariff question.

When the republic was an infant, and Washington was in his prime, it presented its puzzle to the young nation. When the new Jerusalem shall come down to earth it will doubtless interrupt great crowds engaged in its discussion. One of the first conundrums presented to the new municipality will be whether the tariff is a tax or a benefaction; whether it is donated by the producer or paid by the consumer; whether it stimulates infant industry or fosters trusts, or is the

author of all our blessings or of all our woes. The saints and citizens of the Celestial City will doubtless employ the same old stock arguments that have rung their changes down the centuries. The devouring ivy may destroy the granite tower, sand storms may grind and mar the pyramids, earthquakes shatter the proudest temple, volcanoes unseat the firmest cliff, but so far no power, natural or artificial, has been able to deprive this mighty problem of any of its original freshness.

Eighteen years have quickly passed since grasping eagerly my yellow grip I started for the train to speak for Harrison, and seventeen years have flown since I began the writing of this book. Our leader in that strife has been translated from the highest peak of earthly fame to that bright world where fondest hopes now tend, leaving behind a trail of heavenly light to lure the nations upward. His strongest aides have finished noble courses and our grateful land their honored names and relics guards with reverential love. Where now are all the poisoned shafts that flew so thick about them? Gone, with the bitterness that gave them wing, and time has placed a halo around the heads that then were marks for slander. Like a gnarled and rugged oak that stubbornly resists the storms of time, the Democratic

champion still survives and claims respect from those who most defamed him. Before a century has gone mayhap he who won and he who lost shall count as equals in the nation's shrine and there alike be reverenced. Such is the havoc time often plays with all the dreams of men.

To this great contest I bestowed my mite, in favor of the party of my choice, and like the dew which gives the ocean all it has, was swallowed up and lost. I do not now repine, for fate has dealt most kindly with me. In the soft air of sweet oblivion I have enjoyed repose that office-seekers never know. The swiftly passing years have fallen lightly on me, and now at fifty I look back and smile on all the anxious cares that then I felt. As now again I turn the leaflets of my manuscripts I see the traces of a vanished hand and I hear again the merry laugh that often rang so clear while were set down the words that there are written. A pang of sorrow mingles with my mirth and I must give it place. I dare not count the graves of buried hopes, nor note the havoc that the years have wrought. The earth is in its place. All stars will hold their course. Firm and secure the nation stands and guards alike the tombs of those who gave it birth and those whose works pre-

served it. Among the multitudes who pass upon the stage and like the flying swallows flutter by, I, too, have had my little say and thus have served my time as best I might. As I look back along the vista of the years I cannot say that if some power would resurrect the past and place again upon the boards the most forgotten play of 1888, that I would be a player, or if this little book I finish now instead were just begun that it would reach the finish. The hustling vigor of my manhood's prime now sees the slanting rays of afternoon and gives less time for trifles. But what I have written now shall stand. To me it seems a jolly tale, full of mistakes and mirth-provoking scenes, such as may cheer an idle hour and still give some instruction. As such I finish it and send it forth to sink or float, as pleases those who read. The gay may laugh and credit me with wit, the solemn frown and hold me much to blame; the critic pierce each fancy with his pen and write me down a fool. All this I can endure. The grass will grow as green upon my grave. But heaven forfend that these, my wavering lines, shall ever meet that dense, unmitigated ass, that stupid, mournful, addle-pated imbecile, who shall, with solemn visage, sadly ask if all my tales be true.

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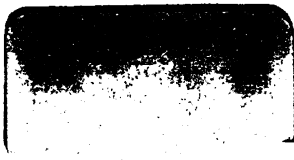
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